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Charles Dickens

THE WORLD'S GREATEST BOOKS

VOL. III

FICTION

McKinlay, Stone & Mackenzie

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THE WORLD'S GREATEST BOOKS

JOINT EDITORS

Lord Northcliffe (Alfred Harmsworth)
and
S. S. McClure

VOL. III

FICTION

McKinlay, Stone & Mackenzie

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Fiction

ALPHONSE DAUDET

Tartarin of Tarascon

I.—The Mighty Hunter at Home

I REMEMBER my first visit to Tartarin of Tarascon as clearly as if it had been yesterday, though it is now more than a dozen years ago. When you had passed into his back garden, you would never have fancied yourself in France. Every tree and plant had been brought from foreign climes; he was such a fellow for collecting the curiosities of Nature, this wonderful Tartarin. His garden boasted, for instance, an example of the baobab, that

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Alphonse Daudet, the celebrated French novelist, was born at Nimes on May 13, 1840, and as a youth of seventeen went to Paris, where he began as a poet at eighteen, and at twenty-two made his first efforts in the drama. He soon found his feet as a contributor to the leading journals of the day and a successful writer for the stage. He was thirty-two when he wrote "Tartarin of Tarascon," than which no better comic tale has been produced in modern times. Tarascon is a real town, not far from the birthplace of Daudet, and the people of the district have always had a reputation for "drawing the long bow." It was to satirise this amiable weakness of his southern compatriots that the novelist created the character of Tartarin, but while he makes us laugh at the absurd misadventures of the lion-hunter, it will be noticed how ingeniously he prevents our growing out of temper with him, how he contrives to keep a warm corner in our hearts for the bragging, simple-minded, good-natured fellow. That is to say, it is a work of essential humour, and the lively style in which the story is told attracts us to it time and again with undiminished pleasure. In two subsequent books, "Tartarin in the Alps," and "Port Tarascon," Daudet recounted further adventures of his delightful hero. His "Sapho" and "Kings in Exile" have also been widely read. Daudet died on December 17, 1897.

giant of the vegetable world, but Tartarin's specimen was only big enough to occupy a mignonette pot. He was mightily proud of it, all the same.

The great sight of his place, however, was the hero's private den at the bottom of the garden. Picture to yourself a large hall gleaming from top to bottom with firearms and weapons of all sorts: carbines, rifles, blunderbusses, bowie-knives, revolvers, daggers, flint-arrows—in a word, examples of the deadly weapons of all races used by man in all parts of the world. Everything was neatly arranged, and labelled as if it were in a public museum. "Poisoned Arrows. Please do not touch!" was the warning on one of the cards. "Weapons loaded. Have a care!" greeted you from another. My word, it required some pluck to move about in the den of the great Tartarin.

There were books of travel and adventure, books about mighty hunting on the table in the centre of the room; and seated at the table was a short and rather fat, red-haired fellow of about forty-five, with a closely-trimmed beard and a pair of bright eyes. He was in his shirt-sleeves, reading a book held in one hand while he gesticulated wildly with a large pipe in the other—Tartarin! He was evidently imagining himself the daring hero of the story.

Now you must know that the people of Tarascon were tremendously keen on hunting, and Tartarin was the chief of the hunters. You may think this funny when you know there was not a living thing to shoot at within miles of Tarascon; scarcely a sparrow to attract local sportsmen. Ah, but you don't know how ingenious they are down there.

Every Sunday morning off the huntsmen sallied with their guns and ammunition, the hounds yelping at their heels. Each man as he left in the morning took with him a brand new cap, and when they got well into the country and were ready for sport, they took their caps

off, threw then high in the air, and shot at them as they fell. In the evening you would see them returning with their riddled caps stuck on the points of their guns, and of all these brave men Tartarin was the most admired, as he always swung into town with the most hopeless rag of a cap at the end of a day's sport. There's no mistake, he was a wonder!

But for all his adventurous spirit, he had a certain amount of caution. There were really two men inside the skin of Tartarin. The one Tartarin said to him, "Cover yourself with glory." The other said to him, "Cover yourself with flannel." The one, imagining himself fighting Red Indians, would call for "An axe! An axe! Somebody give me an axe!" The other, knowing that he was cosy by his fireside, would ring the bell and say, "Jane, my coffee."

One evening at Costecalde's, the gunsmith's, when Tartarin was explaining some mechanism of a rifle, the door was opened and an excited voice announced, "A lion! A lion!" The news seemed incredible, but you can imagine the terror that seized the little group at the gunsmith's as they asked for more news. It appeared that the lion was to be seen in a travelling menagerie newly arrived from Beaucaire.

A lion at last, and here in Tarascon! Suddenly, when the full truth had dawned upon Tartarin, he shouldered his gun, and, turning to Major Bravida, "Let us go to see him!" he thundered. Following him went the cap-hunters. Arrived at the menagerie, where many Tarasconians were already wandering from cage to cage, Tartarin entered with his gun over his shoulder to make inquiries about the king of beasts. His entrance was rather a wet blanket on the other visitors, who, seeing their hero thus armed, thought there might be danger, and were about to flee. But the proud bearing of the great man reassured them, and Tartarin continued his

round of the booth until he faced the lion from the Atlas Mountains.

Here he stood carefully studying the creature, who sniffed and growled in surly temper, and then, rising, shook his mane and gave vent to a terrible roar, directed full at Tartarin.

Tartarin alone stood his ground, stern and immovable, in front of the cage, and the valiant cap-hunters, somewhat reassured by his bravery, again drew near and heard him murmur, as he gazed on the lion, "Ah, yes, there's a hunt for you!"

Not another word did Tartarin utter that day. Yet next day nothing was spoken about in the town but his intention to be off to Algeria to hunt the lions of the Atlas Mountains. When asked if this were true his pride would not let him deny it, and he pretended that it might be true. So the notion grew, until that night at his club Tartarin announced, amid tremendous cheering, that he was sick of cap-hunting, and meant very soon to set forth in pursuit of the lions of the Atlas.

Now began a great struggle between the two Tartarins. While the one was strongly in favour of the adventure, the other was strongly opposed to leaving his snug little Baobab Villa and the safety of Tarascon. But he had let himself in for this, and felt he would have to see it through. So he began reading up the books of African travel, and found from these how some of the explorers had trained themselves for the work by enduring hunger, thirst, and other privations before they set out. Tartarin began cutting down his food, taking very watery soup. Early in the morning, too, he walked round the town seven or eight times, and at nights he would stay in the garden from ten till eleven o'clock, alone with his gun, to inure himself to night chills; while, so long as the menagerie remained in Tarascon, a strange figure might have been seen in the dark, prowling around the tent, listening to the growling of the lion. This was

Tartarin, accustoming himself to be calm when the king of beasts was raging.

The feeling began to grow, however, that the hero was shirking. He showed no haste to be off. At length, one night Major Bravida went to Baobab Villa and said very solemnly, "Tartarin, you must go!"

It was a terrible moment for Tartarin, but he realised the solemnity of the words, and, looking around his cosy little den with a moist eye, he replied at length in a choking voice, "Bravida, I shall go!" Having made this irrevocable decision, he now pushed ahead his final preparations with some show of haste. From Bompard's he had two large trunks, one inscribed with "Tartarin of Tarascon. Case of Arms," and he sent to Marseilles all manner of provisions of travel, including a patent camptent of the latest style.

II.—Tartarin Sets off to Lion-Land

Then the great day of his departure arrived. All the town was agog. The neighbourhood of Baobab Villa was crammed with spectators. About ten o'clock the bold hero issued forth.

"He's a Turk! He's wearing spectacles!" This was the astonished cry of the beholders, and, sure enough, Tartarin had thought it his duty to don Algerian costume because he was going to Algeria. He also carried two heavy rifles, one on each shoulder, a huge hunting-knife at his waist and a revolver in a leather case. A pair of large blue spectacles were worn by him, for the sun in Algeria is terribly strong, you know.

At the station the doors of the waiting-room had to be closed to keep the crowd out, while the great man took leave of his friends, making promises to each, and jotting down notes on his tablets of the various people to whom he would send lion-skins.

Oh, that I had the brush of an artist, that I might paint

you some pictures of Tartarin during his three days aboard the Zouave on the voyage from Marseilles! But I have no facility with the brush, and mere words cannot convey how he passed from the proudly heroic to the hopelessly miserable in the course of the journey. Worst of all, while he was groaning in his stuffy bunk, he knew that a very merry party of passengers were enjoying themselves in the saloon. He was still in his bunk when the ship came to her moorings at Algiers, and he got up with a sudden jerk, under the impression that the Zouave was sinking. Seizing his many weapons, he rushed on deck, to find it was not foundering, but only arriving.

Soon after Tartarin had set foot on shore, following a great negro porter, he was almost stupefied by the babel of tongues; but, fortunately, a policeman took him in hand and had him directed, together with his enormous collection of luggage, to the European hotel.

On arriving at his hotel, he was so fatigued that his marvellous collection of weapons had to be taken from him, and he had to be carried to bed, where he snored very soundly until it was striking three o'clock. He had slept all the evening, through the night and morning, and well into the next afternoon!

He awakened refreshed, and the first thought in his mind was, "I'm in lion-land at last!" But the thought sent a cold shiver through him, and he dived under the bedclothes. A moment later he determined to be up. Exclaiming, "Now for the lions!" he jumped on the floor and began his preparations.

His plan was to get out at once into the country, take ambush for the night, shoot the first lion that came along, and then back to the hotel for breakfast. So off he went, carrying not only his usual arsenal, but the marvellous patent tent strapped to his back. He attracted no little attention as he trudged along, and catching sight of a very fine camel, his heart beat fast, for he thought the lions could not be far off now.

It was quite dark by the time he had got only a little way beyond the outskirts of the town, scrambling over ditches and bramble-hedges. After much hard work of this kind, the mighty hunter suddenly stopped, whispering to himself, "I seem to smell a lion hereabouts." He sniffed keenly in all directions. To his excited imagination, it seemed a likely place for a lion; so, dropping on one knee, and laying one of his guns in front of him, he waited.

He waited very patiently. One hour, two hours; but nothing stirred. Then he suddenly remembered that great lion-hunters take a little young goat with them to attract the lion by its bleating. Having forgotten to supply himself with one, Tartarin conceived the happy idea of bleating like a kid. He started softly, calling, "Meh, meh!" He was really afraid that a lion might hear him, but as no lion seemed to be paying attention, he became bolder in his "mehs," until the noise he made was more like the bellowing of a bull.

But hush! What was that? A huge black object had for the moment loomed up against the dark blue sky. It stooped, sniffing the ground; then seemed to move away again, only to return suddenly. It must be the lion at last; so, taking a steady aim, bang went the gun of Tartarin, and a terrible howling came in response. Clearly his shot had told; the wounded lion had made off. He would now wait for the female to appear, as he had read in books.

But two or more hours passed, and she did not come; and the ground was damp, and the night air cold, so the hunter thought he would camp for the night. After much struggling, he could not get his patent tent to open. Finally, he threw it on the ground in a rage, and lay on the top of it. Thus he slept until the bugles in the barracks near by wakened him in the morning. For behold, instead of finding himself out on the Sahara, he was in the kitchen garden of some suburban Algerian!

"These people are mad," he growled to himself, "to plant their artichokes where lions are roaming about. Surely I have been dreaming. Lions do come here; there's proof positive."

From artichoke to artichoke, from field to field, he followed the thin trail of blood, and came at length to a poor little donkey he had wounded!

Tartarin's first feeling was one of vexation. There is such a difference between a lion and an ass, and the poor little creature looked so innocent. The great hunter knelt down and tried to stanch the donkey's wounds, and it seemed grateful to him, for it feebly flapped its long ears two or three times before it lay still for ever.

Suddenly a voice was heard calling, "Noiraud! Noiraud!" It was "the female." She came in the form of an old French woman with a large red umbrella, and it would have been better for Tartarin to have faced a female lion.

When the unhappy man tried to explain how he had mistaken her little donkey for a lion, she thought he was making fun of her, and belaboured him with her umbrella. When her husband came on the scene the matter was soon adjusted by Tartarin agreeing to pay eight pounds for the damage he had done, the price of the donkey being really something like eight shillings. The donkey-owner was an inn-keeper, and the sight of Tartarin's money made him quite friendly. He invited the lion-hunter to have some food at the inn with him before he left. And as they walked thither he was amazed to be told by the innkeeper that he had never seen a lion there in twenty years!

Clearly, the lions were to be looked for further south. "I'll make tracks for the south, too," said Tartarin to himself. But he first of all returned to his hotel in an omnibus. Think of it! But before he was to go south on the high adventure, he loafed about the city of Algiers for some time, going to the theatres and other

places of amusement, where he met Prince Gregory of Montenegro, with whom he made friends.

One day the captain of the Zouave came across him in the town, and showed him a note about himself in a Tarascon newspaper. This spoke of the uncertainty that prevailed as to the fate of the great hunter, and wound up with these words:

"Some Negro traders state, however, that they met in the open desert a European whose description answers to that of Tartarin, and who was making tracks for Timbuctoo. May Heaven guard for us our hero!"

Tartarin went red and white by turns as he read this, and realised that he was in for it. He very much wished to return to his beloved Tarascon, but to go there without having shot some lions—one at least—was impossible, and so it was Southward ho!

III.—Tartarin's Adventures in the Desert

The lion-hunter was keenly disappointed, after a very long journey in the stage-coach, to be told that there was not a lion left in all Algeria, though a few panthers might still be found worth shooting.

He got out at the town of Milianah, and let the coach go on, as he thought he might as well take things easily if, after all, there were no lions to be shot. To his amazement, however, he came across a real live lion at the door of a café.

"What made them say there were no more lions?" he cried, astounded at the sight. The lion lifted in its mouth a wooden bowl from the pavement, and a passing Arab threw a copper in the bowl, at which the lion wagged its tail. Suddenly the truth dawned on Tartarin. He was a poor, blind, tame lion, which a couple of negroes were taking through the streets, just like a performing dog. His blood was up at the very idea. Shouting, "You scoundrels, to humiliate these noble beasts so!"

he rushed and took the degrading bowl from the royal jaws of the lion. This led to a quarrel with the negroes, at the height of which Prince Gregory of Montenegro came upon the scene.

The prince told him a most untrue story about a convent in the north of Africa where lions were kept, to be sent out with priests to beg for money. He also assured him that there were lots of lions in Algeria, and that he would join him in his hunt.

Thus it was in the company of Prince Gregory, and with a following of half a dozen negro porters, that Tartarin set off early next morning for the Shereef Plain; but they very soon had trouble, both with the porters and with the provisions Tartarin had brought for his great journey. The prince suggested dismissing the negroes and buying a couple of donkeys, but Tartarin could not bear the thought of donkeys, for a reason with which we are acquainted. He readily agreed, however, to the purchase of a camel, and when he was safely helped up on its hump, he sorely wished the people of Tarascon could see him. But his pride speedily had a fall, for he found the movement of the camel worse than that of the boat in crossing the Mediterranean. He was afraid he might disgrace France. Indeed, if truth must out, France was disgraced! So, for the remainder of their expedition, which lasted nearly a month, Tartarin preferred to walk on foot and lead the camel.

One night in the desert, Tartarin was sure he heard sounds just like those he had studied at the back of the travelling menagerie at Tarascon. He was positive they were in the neighbourhood of a lion at last. He prepared to go forward and stalk the beast. The prince offered to accompany him, but Tartarin resolutely refused. He would meet the king of beasts alone! Entrusting his pocket-book, full of precious documents and bank-notes, to the prince, in case he might lose it in a tussle with the lion, he moved forward. His teeth were chatter-

ing in his head when he lay down, trembling, to await the lion.

It must have been two hours before he was sure that the beast was moving quite near him in the dry bed of a river. Firing two shots in the direction whence the sound came, he got up and bolted back to where he had left the camel and the prince—but there was only the camel there now! The prince had waited a whole month for such a chance!

In the morning he realised that he had been robbed by a thief who pretended to be a prince. And here he was in the heart of savage Africa with a little pocket money only, much useless luggage, a camel, and not a single lion-skin for all his trouble.

Sitting on one of the desert-tombs erected over pious Mohammedans, the great man fell to weeping bitterly. But, even as he wept the bushes were pushed aside a little in front of him, and a huge lion presented itself. To his honour, be it said, Tartarin never moved a muscle, but, breathing a fervent "At last!" he leapt to his feet, and, levelling his rifle, planted two explosive bullets in the lion's head. All was over in a moment, for he had nearly blown the king of beasts to pieces! But in another moment he saw two tall, enraged negroes bearing down upon him. He had seen them before at Milianah, and this was their poor blind lion! Fortunately for Tartarin, he was not so deeply in the desert as he had thought, but merely outside the town of Orleansville, and a policeman now came up, attracted by the firing, and took full particulars.

The upshot of it was that he had to suffer much delay in Orleansville, and was eventually fined one hundred pounds. How to pay this was a problem which he solved by selling all his extensive outfit, bit by bit. When his debts were paid, he had nothing but the lion's skin and the camel. The former he dispatched to Major Bravida at Tarascon. Nobody would buy the camel, and its

master had to face all the journey back to Algiers in short stages on foot.

IV.—The Home-Coming of the Hero

The camel showed a curious affection for him, and followed him as faithfully as a dog. When, at the end of eight days' weary tramping, he came at last to Algiers, he did all he could to lose the animal, and hoped he had succeeded. He met the captain of the Zouave, who told him that all Algiers had been laughing at the story of how he had killed the blind lion, and he offered Tartarin a free passage home.

The Zouave was getting up steam next day as the dejected Tartarin had just stepped into the captain's long-boat, when, lo! his faithful camel came tearing down the quay and gazed affectionately at its friend. Tartarin pretended not to notice it; but the animal seemed to implore him with his eyes to be taken away. "You are the last Turk," it seemed to say, "I am the last camel. Let us never part again, O my Tartarin!"

But the lion-hunter pretended to know nothing of this ship of the desert.

As the boat pulled off to the Zouave, the camel jumped into the water and swam after it, and was taken aboard. At last Tartarin had the joy of hearing the Zouave cast anchor at Marseilles, and, having no luggage to trouble him, he rushed off the boat at once and hastened through the town to the railway station, hoping to get ahead of the camel.

He booked third class, and quickly hid himself in a carriage. Off went the train. But it had not gone far when everybody was looking out of the windows and laughing. Behind the train ran the camel—holding his own, too!

What a humiliating home-coming! All his weapons of the chase left on Moorish soil, not a lion with him, nothing but a silly camel!

"Tarascon! Tarascon!" shout the porters as the train slows up at the station, and the hero gets out. He had hoped to slink home unobserved; but, to his amazement, he is received with shouts of "Long live Tartarin!" "Three cheers for the lion-slayer!" The people are waving their caps in the air; it is no joke, they are serious. There is Major Bravida, and there the more noteworthy cap-hunters, who cluster round their chief and carry him in triumph down the stairs.

Now, all this was the result of sending home the skin of the blind lion. But the climax was reached when, following the crowd down the stairs of the station, limping from his long run, came the camel. Even this Tartarin turned to good account. He reassured his fellow-citizens, patting the camel's hump.

"This is my camel; a noble beast! It has seen me kill all my lions."

And so, linking his arm with the worthy major, he calmly wended his way to Baobab Villa, amid the ringing cheers of the populace. On the road he began a recital of his hunts.

"Picture to yourself," he said, "a certain evening in the open Sahara——"

THOMAS DAY

Sandford and Merton

I.—Mr. Barlow and his Pupils

In the western part of England lived a gentleman of a large fortune, whose name was Merton. He had a great estate in Jamaica, but had determined to stay some years in England for the education of his only son. When Tommy Merton came from Jamaica he was six years old. Naturally very good-natured, he had been spoiled by indulgence. His mother was so fond of him that she gave him everything he cried for, and would not let him learn to read because he complained that it made his head ache. The consequence was that, though Master Merton had everything he wanted, he was fretful and unhappy, made himself disagreeable to everybody, and often met with very dangerous accidents. He was also so delicately brought up that he was perpetually ill.

Thomas Day was born in London on June 22, 1748, and educated at the Charterhouse and at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Entering the Middle Temple in 1765, he was called to the Bar ten years later, but never practised. A contemporary and disciple of Rousseau, he convinced himself that human suffering was, in the main, the result of the artificial arrangements of society, and inheriting a fortune at an early age he spent large sums in philanthropy. A poem written by him in 1773, entitled "The Dying Negro," has been described as supplying the keynote of the anti-slavery movement. His "History of Sandford and Merton," published in three volumes between the years 1783 and 1789, provided a channel through which many generations of English people have imbibed a kind of refined Rousseauism. It retains its interest for the philosophic mind, despite the burlesque of *Punch* and its waning popularity as a book for children. Thomas Day died through a fall from his horse on September 28, 1789.

Very near to Mr. Merton's seat lived a plain, honest farmer named Sandford, whose only son, Harry, was not much older than Master Merton, but who, as he had always been accustomed to run about in the fields, to follow the labourers when they were ploughing, and to drive the sheep to their pasture, was active, strong, hardy, and fresh-coloured. Harry had an honest, good-natured countenance, was never out of humour, and took the greatest pleasure in obliging others, in helping those less fortunate than himself, and in being kind to every living thing. Harry was a great favourite, particularly with Mr. Barlow, the clergyman of the parish, who taught him to read and write, and had him almost always with him.

One summer morning, while Master Merton and a maid were walking in the fields, a large snake suddenly started up and curled itself round Tommy's leg. The maid ran away, shrieking for help, whilst the child, in his terror, dared not move. Harry, who happened to be near, ran up, and seizing the snake by the neck, tore it from Tommy's leg, and threw it to a great distance. Mrs. Merton wished to adopt the boy who had so bravely saved her son, and Harry's intelligence so appealed to Mr. Merton that he thought it would be an excellent thing if Tommy could also benefit by Mr. Barlow's instruction. With this view he decided to propose to the farmer to pay for the board and education of Harry that he might be a constant companion to Tommy. Mr. Barlow, on being consulted, agreed to take Tommy for some months under his care; but refused any monetary recompense.

The day after Tommy went to Mr. Barlow's the clergyman took his two pupils into the garden, and, taking a spade in his own hand, and giving Harry a hoe, they both began to work. "Everybody that eats," he said, "ought to assist in procuring food. This is my bed, and that is Harry's. If, Tommy, you choose to join us, I

will mark you out a piece of ground, all the produce of which shall be your own."

"No, indeed," said Tommy; "I am a gentleman, and don't choose to slave like a ploughboy."

"Just as you please, Mr. Gentleman," said Mr. Barlow. And Tommy, not being asked to share the plate of ripe cherries with which Mr. Barlow and Harry refreshed themselves after their labour, wandered disconsolately about the garden, surprised and vexed to find himself in a place where nobody felt any concern whether he was pleased or not. Meanwhile, Harry, after a few words of advice from Mr. Barlow, read aloud the story of "The Ants and the Flies," in which it is related how the flies perished for lack of laying up provisions for the winter, whereas the industrious ants, by working during the summer, provided for their maintenance when the bad weather came.

Mr. Barlow and Harry then rambled into the fields, where Mr. Barlow pointed out the several kinds of plants to be seen, and told his little companion the name and nature of each. When they returned to dinner Tommy, who had been skulking about all day, came in, and being very hungry, was going to sit down to the table, when Mr. Barlow said, "No, sir; though you are too much of a gentleman to work, we, who are not so proud, do not choose to work for the idle!"

Upon this Tommy retired into a corner, crying as if his heart would break; when Harry, who could not bear to see his friend so unhappy, looked up, half-crying, into Mr. Barlow's face, and said, "Pray, sir, may I do as I please with my dinner?"

"Yes, to be sure, my boy," was the reply.

"Why, then," said Harry, "I will give it to poor Tommy, who wants it more than I do."

Tommy took it and thanked Harry; but without turning his eyes from the ground.

"I see," said Mr. Barlow, "that though certain gentle-

men are too proud to be of any use to themselves, they are not above taking the bread that other people have been working hard for."

At this Tommy cried more bitterly than before.

The next day, when they went into the garden, Tommy begged that he might have a hoe, too, and, having been shown how to use it, soon worked with the greatest pleasure, which was much increased when he was asked to share the fruit provided after the work was done. It seemed to him the most delicious fruit that he had ever tasted.

Harry read as before, the story this time being about the gentleman and the basket-maker. It described how a rich man, jealous of the happiness of a poor basket-maker, destroyed the latter's means of livelihood, and was sent by a magistrate with his humble victim to an island, where the two were made to serve the natives. On this island the rich man, because he possessed neither talents to please nor strength to labour, was condemned to be the basket-maker's servant. When they were recalled, the rich man, having acquired wisdom by his misfortunes, not only treated the basket-maker as a friend during the rest of his life, but employed his riches in relieving the poor.

II.—Gentleman Tommy Learns to Read

From this time forward Mr. Barlow and his two pupils used to work in their garden every morning; and when they were fatigued they retired to the summer-house, where Harry, who improved every day in reading, used to entertain them with some pleasant story. Then Harry went home for a week, and the morning after, when Tommy expected that Mr. Barlow would read to him as usual, he found to his great disappointment, that gentleman was busy and could not. The same thing happening the next day and the day after, Tommy said to

himself, "Now, if I could but read like Harry, I should not need to ask anybody to do it for me." So when Harry returned, Tommy took an early opportunity of asking him how he came to be able to read.

"Why," said Harry, "Mr. Barlow taught me my letters; and then, by putting syllables together, I learnt to read."

"And could you not show me my letters?" asked Tommy.

"Very willingly," was Harry's reply. And the lessons proceeded so well that Tommy, who learned the whole alphabet at the very first lesson, at the end of two months was able to read aloud to Mr. Barlow "The History of the Two Dogs," which shows how vain it is to expect courage in those who lead a life of indolence and repose, and that constant exercise and proper discipline are frequently able to change contemptible characters into good ones.

Later, Harry read the story of Androcles and the Lion, and asked how it was that one person should be the servant of another and bear so much ill-treatment.

"As to that," said Tommy, "some folks are born gentlemen, and then they must command others; and some are born servants, and they must do as they are bid." And he recalled how the black men and women in Jamaica had to wait upon him, and how he used to beat them when he was angry. But when Mr. Barlow asked him how these people came to be slaves, he could only say that his father had bought them, and that he was born a gentleman.

"Then," said Mr. Barlow, "if you were no longer to have a fine house, nor fine clothes, nor a great deal of money, somebody that had all these things might make you a slave, and use you ill, and do whatever he liked with you."

Seeing that he could not but admit this, Tommy became convinced that no one should make a slave, of an-

other, and decided that for the future he would never use their black William ill.

Some days after this Tommy became interested in the growing of corn, and Harry promising to get some seed from his father, Tommy got up early and, having dug very perseveringly in a corner of his garden to prepare the ground for the seed, asked Mr. Barlow if this was not very good of him.

"That," said Mr. Barlow, "depends upon the use you intend to make of the corn when you have raised it. Where," he asked, "will be the great goodness in your sowing corn for your own eating? That is no more than all the people round here continually do. And if they did not do it, they would be obliged to fast."

"But then," said Tommy, "they are not gentlemen, as I am."

"What," answered Mr. Barlow, "must not gentlemen eat as well as others; and therefore, is it not for their interest to know how to procure food as well as other people?"

"Yes, sir," answered Tommy; "but they can have other people to raise it for them."

"How does that happen?"

"Why they pay other people to work for them, or buy bread when it is made."

"Then they pay for it with money?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then they must have money before they can buy corn?"

"Certainly, sir."

"But have all gentlemen money?"

Tommy hesitated some time, and at last said, "I believe not always, sir."

"Why, then," said Mr. Barlow, "if they have not money, they will find it difficult to procure corn, unless they raise it for themselves." And he proceeded to recount the History of the Two Brothers, Pizarro and

Alonzo, the former of whom, setting out on a gold-hunting expedition, prevailed upon the latter to accompany him, and became dependent upon Alonzo, who, instead of taking gold-seeking implements, provided himself with the necessaries for stocking a farm.

III.—Town Life and Country Life

This story was followed by others, describing life in different and distant parts of the world; and in addition to the knowledge they acquired in this way, Tommy and Harry, in their intercourse with their neighbours and in the cultivation of their gardens, learned a great deal. Tommy in particular, growing much kinder towards the poor and towards dumb animals, as well as growing in physical well-being.

Mr. Barlow's young pupils were gradually taught many interesting and useful facts about natural history. They learned to cultivate their powers of observation also by studying the heavens. From a study of the stars their tutor drew them on to an acquaintance with the compass, the telescope, the magic lantern, the magnet, and the wonders of arithmetic.

The stories of foreign lands were interspersed with others illustrating the habits of society; one for example, told how a certain rich man was cured of the gout, showing how, while most of the diseases of the poor originate in the want of food and necessaries, the rich are generally the victims of their own sloth and intemperance.

"Dear me," said Tommy on one occasion, "what a number of accidents people are subject to in this world."

"It is very true," said Mr. Barlow; "but as that is the case, it is necessary to improve ourselves in every manner, that we may be able to struggle against them."

TOMMY: Indeed, sir, I begin to believe it is; for

when I was younger than I am now, I remember I was always fretful and hurting myself, though I had two or three people constantly to take care of me. At present I seem quite another thing. I do not mind falling down and hurting myself, or cold, or scarcely anything that happens.

MR. BARLOW: And which do you prefer—to be as you are now, or as you were before?

TOMMY: As I am now, a great deal, sir; for then I always had something or another the matter with me. At present I think I am ten times stronger and healthier than ever I was in my life.

All the same, Tommy found it difficult at first to understand how people who lived in countries where they had to undergo great hardships could be so attached to their own land as to prefer it to any other country in the world. "I have," he said, "seen a great many ladies and little misses at our house, and whenever they were talking of the places where they should like to live, I have always heard them say that they hated the country of all things, though they were born and bred there.

MR. BARLOW: And yet there are thousands who bear to live in it all their lives, and have no desire to change. Should you, Harry, like to go to live in some town?

HARRY: Indeed, sir, I should not, for then I must leave everything I love in the world.

TOMMY: And have you ever been in any large town?

HARRY: Once I was in Exeter, but I did not much like it. The houses seemed to me to stand too thick and close, and then there are little, narrow alleys where the poor live, and the houses are so high that neither light nor air can ever get to them. And they most of them appeared so dirty and unhealthy that it made my heart ache to look at them. I went home the next day, and never was better pleased in my life. When I came to the top of the great hill, from which you have a prospect of our house, I really thought I should have

cried with joy. The fields looked all so pleasant, and the very cattle, when I went about to see them, all seemed glad that I was come home again.

MR. BARLOW: You see by this that it is very possible for people to like the country, and to be happy in it. But as to the fine young ladies you talk of, the truth is that they neither love nor would be contented in any place. It is no wonder they dislike the country, where they find neither employment nor amusement. They wish to go to London, because they there meet with numbers of people as idle and as frivolous as themselves; and these people assist each other to talk about trifles and to waste their time.

TOMMY: That is true, sir, really; for when we have a great deal of company, I have often observed that they never talk about anything but eating or dressing, or men and women that are paid to make faces at the play-house or a great room called Ranelagh, where everybody goes to meet their friends.

Which discourse led on to a story of the ancient Spartans, and their superiority to the luxury-loving Persians.

IV.—The Bull-Baiting

The time had now arrived when Tommy was by appointment to go home and spend some time with his parents. Mr. Barlow had been long afraid of this visit, as he knew his pupil would meet a great deal of company there who would give him impressions of a nature very different from those he had, with so much assiduity, been labouring to excite. However, the visit was unavoidable, and Mrs. Merton sent so pressing an invitation for Harry to accompany his friend, after having obtained the consent of his father, that Mr. Barlow, with much regret, took leave of his pupils.

When the boys arrived at Mr. Merton's they were introduced into a crowded drawing-room full of the

most elegant company which that part of the country afforded, among whom were several young gentlemen and ladies of different ages who had been purposely invited to spend their holidays with Master Merton.

As soon as Master Merton entered, every tongue was let loose in his praise. As to Harry, he had the good fortune to be taken notice of by nobody except Mr. Merton, who received him with great cordiality, and a Miss Simmons, who had been brought up by an uncle who endeavoured, by a hardy and robust education, to prevent in his niece that sickly delicacy which is considered so great an ornament in fashionable life. Harry and this young lady became great friends, though to a considerable extent they were the butt of the others.

A lady who sat by Mrs. Merton, asked her, in a whisper loud enough to be heard all over the room, whether (indicating Harry) that was the little plough-boy whom she had heard Mr. Barlow was attempting to bring up like a gentleman? Mrs. Merton answered "Yes." "Indeed," said the lady, "I should have thought so by his plebeian look and vulgar air. But I wonder, my dear madam, that you will suffer your son, who, without flattery, is one of the most accomplished children I ever saw, with quite the air of fashion, to keep such company."

Whilst Tommy was being estranged from his friend by a constant succession of flattery from his elders and the example of others of his own age, Harry, who never said any of those brilliant things that render a boy the darling of the ladies, and who had not that vivacity, or rather impertinence, which frequently passes for wit with superficial people, paid the greatest attention to what was said to him, and made the most judicious observations upon subjects he understood. For this reason, Miss Simmons, although much older and better informed, received great satisfaction from conversing with him, and thought him infinitely more agreeable and sensible

than any of the smart young gentlemen she had hitherto seen.

One morning the young gentlemen agreed to take a walk in the country. Harry went with them. As they walked across a common they saw a great number of people moving forward towards a bull-baiting. Instantly they were seized with a desire to see the diversion. One obstacle alone presented itself. Their parents, particularly Mrs. Merton, had made them promise to avoid every kind of danger. However, all except Harry, agreed to go, insisting among themselves that there was no danger.

"Master Harry," said one, "has not said a word. Surely he will not tell of us."

Harry said he did not wish to tell; but if, he added, he were asked, he would have to tell the truth.

A quarrel followed, in which Tommy struck his friend in the face with his fist. This, added to Tommy's recent conduct towards him, caused the tears to start to Harry's eyes, whereupon the others assailed him with cries of "Coward!" "Blackguard!" and so on. Master Mash went further and slapped him in the face. Harry, though Master Mash's inferior in size and strength, returned this by a punch, and a fight ensued, from which, though severely punished himself, Harry emerged the victor, to be assailed with a chorus of congratulation from those who before were loading him with taunts and outrages.

The young gentlemen persisting in their intention to see the bull-baiting, Harry followed at some distance, deciding not to quit his friend till he had once more seen him in a place of safety. As it happened, the bull, after disposing of his early tormentors, broke loose when three fierce dogs were set upon it at once. In the stampede little Tommy fell right in the path of the infuriated animal, and would have lost his life had not Harry, with a courage and presence of mind above his years, sud-

denly seized a prong which one of the fugitives had dropped, and, at the very moment when the bull was stopping to gore his defenceless friend, advanced and wounded it in the flank. The bull turned, and with redoubled rage made at his new assailant, and it is probable that, notwithstanding his intrepidity, Harry would have paid with his own life the price of his assistance to his friend had not a poor negro, whom he had helped earlier in the day, come opportunely to his aid, and by his promptitude and address secured the animal.

The gratitude of Mr. Merton for his son's escape was unbounded, and even Mrs. Merton was ashamed of her disparaging remarks about Harry. As for Tommy, he went to his friend's home to seek reconciliation, reflecting with shame and contempt upon the ridiculous prejudices he had once entertained.

He had now learned to consider all men as his brethren, not forgetting the poor negro; and that, as he said, it is much better to be useful than rich or fine.

DANIEL DEFOE

Robinson Crusoe

I.—I Go to Sea

I WAS born of a good family in the city of York, where my father—a foreigner, of Bremen—settled after having retired from business. My father had given me a competent share of learning and designed me for the law; but I would be satisfied in nothing but going to sea. My mind was filled with thoughts of seeing the world, and nothing could persuade me to give up my desire.

At length, on September 1, 1651, I left home, and went on board a ship bound for London. The ship was no sooner out of the Humber than the wind began to blow and the sea to rise in a most frightful manner; and as

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Daniel Defoe, English novelist, historian and pamphleteer, was born in 1660 or 1661, in London, the son of James Foe, a butcher, and only assumed the name of De Foe, or Defoe, in middle life. He was brought up as a dissenter, and became a dealer in hosiery in the city. He early began to publish his opinions on social and political questions, and was an absolutely fearless writer, audacious and independent, so that he twice suffered imprisonment for his daring. The immortal "Robinson Crusoe" was published on April 25, 1719. Defoe was already fifty-eight years of age. It was the first English work of fiction that represented the men and manners of its own time as they were. It appeared in several parts, and the first part, which is here epitomised, was so successful that no fewer than four editions were printed in as many months. "Robinson Crusoe" was widely pirated, and its authorship gave rise to absurd rumours. Some claimed it had been written by Lord Oxford in the Tower; others that Defoe had appropriated Alexander Selkirk's papers. The latter idea was only justified inasmuch as the story was partly founded on Selkirk's adventures and partly on Dampier's voyages. Defoe died on April 26, 1731.

I had never been at sea before, I was most inexpressibly sick in body and terrified in mind. The next day, however, the wind abated, and for several days the weather continued calm. My fears being forgotten, and the current of my desires returned, I entirely forgot the vows to return home that I made in my distress.

The sixth day of our being at sea we came into Yarmouth Roads and cast anchor. Our troubles were not yet over, however, for a few days later the wind increased till it blew a terrible storm indeed. I began to see terror in the faces even of the seamen themselves; and as the captain passed me, I could hear him softly to himself say, several times, "We shall be all lost!"

My horror of mind put me into such a condition that I can by no words describe it. The storm increased, and the seamen every now and then cried out the ship would founder. One of the men cried out that we had sprung a leak, and all hands were called to the pumps; but the water increasing in the hold, it was apparent that the ship would founder. We fired guns for help, and a ship who had rid it out just ahead of us ventured a boat out. It was with the utmost hazard the boat came near us, but at last we got all into it, and got into shore, though not without much difficulty, and walked afterwards on foot to Yarmouth.

Having some money in my pocket, I travelled to London, and there got acquainted with the master of a ship which traded on the coast of Guinea. This captain, taking a fancy to my conversation, told me if I would make a voyage with him I might do some trading on my own account. I embraced the offer, and went the voyage with him. With the help of some of my relations I raised £40, which I laid out in toys, beads, and such trifles as my friend the captain said were most in demand on the Guinea Coast. It was a prosperous voyage. It made me both a sailor and a merchant, for my adventure yielded me on my return to London almost £300,

and this filled me with those aspiring thoughts which have since so completed my ruin.

I was now set up as a Guinea trader, and made up my mind to go the same voyage again in the same ship; but this was the unhappiest voyage ever man made, for as we were off the African shore we were surprised by a Moorish rover of Salee, who gave chase with all sail. About three in the afternoon he came up with us, and after a great fight we were forced to yield, and were carried all prisoners into the port of Salee, where we were sold as slaves.

I was fortunate enough to fall into the hands of a master who treated me with no little kindness. He frequently went fishing, and as I was dexterous in catching fish, he never went without me. One day he sent me out with a Moor to catch fish for him. Then notions of deliverance darted into my thoughts, and I prepared not for fishing, but for a voyage. When everything was ready, we sailed away to the fishing-grounds. Purposely catching nothing, I said we had better go farther out. The Moor agreed, and I ran the boat out near a league farther; then I brought to as if I would fish. Instead of that, however, I stepped forward, and, stooping behind the Moor, took him by surprise and tossed him overboard. He rose to the surface, and called on me to take him in. For reply I presented a gun at him, and told him if he came nearer the boat I would shoot him, and that as the sea was calm, he might easily swim ashore. So he turned about, and swam for the shore, and I make no doubt but he reached it with ease.

About ten days afterwards, as I was steering out to double a cape, I came in sight of a Portuguese ship. On coming nearer, they hailed me, but I understood not a word. At last a Scotch sailor called to me, and I answered I was an Englishman, and had made my escape from the Moors of Salee. They then bade me come on board, and very kindly took me in, with all my goods.

We had a very good voyage to the Brazils, and when we reached our destination the captain recommended me to an honest man who had a sugar plantation. Here I settled down for a while, and learned the planting of sugar. Then I took a piece of land, and became a planter myself. My affairs prospered, and had I continued in the station I was now in, I had room for many happy things to have yet befallen me; but I was still to be the agent of my own miseries.

II.—Lord of an Island and Alone

Some of my neighbours, hearing that I had a knowledge of Guinea trading, proposed to fit out a vessel and send her to the coast of Guinea to purchase negroes to work in our plantations. I was well pleased with the idea; and when they asked me to go to manage the trading part, I forgot all the perils and hardships of the sea, and agreed to go. A ship being fitted out, we set sail on September 1, 1659.

We had very good weather for twelve days, but after crossing the line, violent hurricanes took us, and drove us out of the way of all human commerce. In this distress, one morning, there was a cry of "Land!" and almost at the same moment the ship struck against a sandbank. We took to a boat, and worked towards the land; but before we could reach it, a raging wave came rolling astern of us, and overset the boat. We were all thrown into the sea, and out of fifteen who were on board, none escaped but myself. I managed, somehow, to scramble to shore, and clambered up the cliffs, and sat me down on the grass half-dead. Night coming on me, I took up my lodging in a tree.

When I waked, it was broad day, the weather clear, and the storm abated. What surprised me most was that in the night the ship had been lifted from the bank by the swelling tide, and driven ashore almost as far as the place

where I had landed. I saw that if we had all kept on board we had been all safe, and I had not been so miserable as to be left entirely destitute of all company as I now was.

I swam out to the ship, and found that her stern lay lifted up on the bank. All the ship's provisions were dry, and, being well disposed to eat, I filled my pockets and ate as I went about other things, for I had no time to lose. We had several spare yards and planks, and with these I made a raft. I emptied three of the seamen's chests, and let them down upon the raft, and filled them with provisions. I also let down the carpenter's chest, and some arms and ammunition—all of which, after much labour, I got safely to land.

My next work was to view the country. Where I was I yet knew not, but after I had with great labour got to the top of a hill which rose up very steep and high, I saw my fate, to my great affliction—*viz.*, that I was in an island, uninhabited except by wild beasts.

I now began to consider that I might yet get a great many things out of the ship which would be useful to me; so every day at low water I went on board, and brought away something or other until I had the biggest magazine that was ever laid up, I believe, for one man. I verily believe, had the calm weather held, I should have brought away the whole ship piece by piece; but on the fourteenth day it blew a storm, and next morning, behold, no more ship was to be seen. I must not forget that I brought on shore two cats and a dog. He was a trusty servant to me many years. I wanted nothing that he could fetch me, nor any company. I only wanted him to talk to me, but that he could not do. Later, I managed to catch a parrot, which did much to cheer my loneliness. I taught him to speak, and it would have done your heart good to have heard the pitying tones in which he used to say, "Robin—poor Robin Crusoe!"

I now went in search of a place where to fix my dwell-

ing. I found a little plain on the side of a rising hill, which was there as steep as a house-side, so that nothing could come down on me from the top. On the side of this rock was a hollow space like the entrance of a cave, before which I resolved to pitch my tent. Before I set up my tent, I drew a half-circle before the hollow place, which extended backwards about twenty yards. In this half-circle I planted two rows of strong stakes, driving them into the ground like piles, above five feet and a half high, and sharpened at the top. Then I took some pieces of cable I had found in the ship, and laid them in rows one upon another between the stakes; and this fence was so strong that neither man nor beast could get into it or over it. The entrance I made to be by a short ladder to go over the top, and when I was in I lifted the ladder after me.

Inside the fence, with infinite labour, I carried all my riches, provisions, ammunition, and stores. And I made me a large tent, also, to preserve me from the rains. When I had done this I began to work my way into the rock. All the earth and stones I dug out I laid up within my fence, and thus I made me a cave just behind my tent which served me like a cellar.

In the middle of my labours it happened that, rummaging in my things, I found a little bag with but husks of corn and dust in it. Wishing to make use of the bag, I shook it out on one side of my fortification. It was a little before the great rains that I threw this stuff away, not remembering that I had thrown anything there; about a month after, I saw some green stalks shooting up. I was perfectly astonished when, after a little longer time, I saw ten or twelve ears of barley. I knew not how it came there. At last it occurred to me that I had shaken out the bag there. Besides the barley there were also a few stalks of rice. I carefully saved the ears of this corn, you may be sure, and resolved to sow them all again. When my corn was ripe, I used a cut-

lass as a scythe, and cut off the ears, and rubbed them out with my hands. At the end of my harvesting I had nearly two bushels of rice, and two bushels and a half of barley. I kept all this for seed, and bore the want of bread with patience.

I soon found that I needed many things to make me comfortable. First I wanted a chair and a table, for without them I must live like a savage. So I set to work. I had never handled a tool in my life, but I had a saw, an axe, and several hatchets, and I soon learned to use them all. If I wanted a board, I had to chop down a tree. From the trunk of the tree I cut a log of the length my board was to be. Then I split the log, and, with infinite labour, hewed it flat till it was as thin as a board. I made myself a table and a chair out of short pieces of board, and from the large boards I made some wide shelves. On these I laid my tools and other things.

From time to time I made many useful things. From a piece of ironwood, cut in the forest with great labour, I made a spade to dig with. Then I wanted a pick-axe, but for long I could not think how I was to get one. At length I made use of crowbars from the wreck. These I heated in the fire, and, little by little, shaped them till I made a pick-axe, proper enough, though heavy.

At first I felt the need of baskets in which to carry things, so I set to work as a basket-maker. It came to my mind that the twigs of the tree whence I cut my stakes might serve. I found them to my purpose as much as I could desire, and, during the next rainy season, I employed myself in making a great many baskets. Though I did not finish them handsomely, yet I made them sufficiently serviceable.

I had, however, one want greater than all the others—bread. My barley was very fine, the grains were large and smooth; but before I could make bread I must grind

the grains into flour. I spent many a day to find out a stone to cut hollow and make fit for a mortar, and could find none; nor were the rocks of the island of hardness sufficient. So I gave it over and rounded a great block of hard wood and, with the help of fire and great labour, made a hollow in it. I made a great heavy pestle of the wood called ironwood.

The baking part was the next thing to be considered; for, first, I had no yeast. As to that, there was no supplying the want, so I did not concern myself much about it. But for an oven I was indeed in great pain. At length I found out an experiment for that also. I made some earthen vessels, broad but not deep, about two feet across, and about nine inches deep. These I burned in the fire till they were as hard as nails and as red as tiles, and when I wanted to bake I made a great fire upon a hearth which I paved with some square tiles of my own making.

When the fire had all burned I drew the embers forward upon my hearth, and let them be there till the hearth was very hot. My loaves being ready, I swept the hearth and set them on the hottest part of it. Over each loaf I placed one of the large earthen pots, and drew the embers all round to keep in and add to the heat. And thus I baked my barley loaves and became, in a little time, a good pastrycook into the bargain.

It need not be wondered at if all these things took up most of the third year of my abode in the island. I had now brought my state of life to be much easier than it was at first, and I learned to look more upon the bright side of my condition and less on the dark.

Had anyone in England met such a man as I was, it must have frightened them, or raised great laughter. On my head I wore a great, high, shapeless cap of goat's skin. Stockings and shoes I had none, but I had made a pair of somethings, I scarce knew what to call them, to slip over my legs; a jacket, with the skirts coming

down to the middle of my thighs, and a pair of open-kneed breeches of the same, completing my outfit. I had a broad belt of goat's skin, and in this I hung, on one side, a saw, on the other, a hatchet. Under my arm hung two pouches for shot and powder; at my back I carried my basket, on my shoulder my gun, and over my head a great clumsy goat's skin umbrella.

A stoic would have smiled to have seen me at dinner. There was my majesty, prince and lord of the whole island. How like a king I dined, too, all alone, attended by my servants! Poll, my parrot, as if he had been my favourite, was the only person permitted to talk to me. My old dog sat at my right hand, and two cats on each side of the table, expecting a bit from my hand as a mark of special favour.

III.—The Footprint

It was my custom to make daily excursions to some part of the island. One day, walking along the beach, I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot plainly impressed on the sand. I stood like one thunderstruck. I listened, I looked around, but I could hear nothing nor see anything. I went up to a rising ground to look further; I walked backwards and forwards on the shore, but I could see only that one impression.

I went to it again. There was exactly a foot—toes, heel, and every part of a foot. How it came thither I knew not; but I hurried home, looking behind me at every two or three steps, and mistaking every bush and tree, fancying every stump to be a man. I had no sleep that night; but my terror gradually wore off, and after some days I ventured down to the beach to take measure of the footprint by my own.

I found it much larger! This filled me again with all manner of fears, and when I went home I began to pre-

pare against an attack. I got out my muskets, loaded them, and went to an enormous amount of labour and trouble—all because I had seen the print of a naked foot on the sand. There seemed to me then no labour too great, no task too toilsome, and I made me a second fortification, and planted a vast number of stakes on the outside of my outer wall, which grew and became a thick grove of trees, entirely concealing the place of my retreat, and adding greatly to my security.

I had now been twenty-two years on the island, and had grown so accustomed to the place that, had I felt myself secure from the attack by savages, I fancied I could have been contented to remain there till I died of old age.

For many months the perturbation of my mind was very great; in the day great troubles overwhelmed me, and in the night I dreamed often of killing savages. About two years after I first knew these fears, I was surprised one morning by seeing five canoes on the shore. I could not tell what to think of it, so went and lay in my castle perplexed and discomforted. At length, becoming very impatient, I clambered up to the top of the hill and perceived, by the help of my perspective glass, no less than thirty men dancing round a fire with barbarous gestures. While I was looking, two miserable wretches were dragged from the boats. One was immediately knocked down, while the other, seeing himself a little at liberty, started away from them and ran along the sands directly towards me. I was dreadfully frightened, that I must acknowledge, when I perceived him run my way, especially when, as I thought, I saw him pursued by the whole body. But my spirits began to recover when I found that but three men followed him, and that he outstripped them exceedingly, in running.

Presently he came to a creek and, making nothing of it, plunged in, landed, and ran on with exceeding

strength. Two of the pursuers swam the creek, but the third went no farther, and soon after went back again. I immediately took my two guns, ran down the hill and clapped myself in the way between the pursuers and the pursued, hallooing aloud to him that fled. Then, rushing on the foremost of the pursuers, I knocked him down with the stock of my piece. The other stopped, as if frightened, but as I came nearer, I perceived he was fitting a bow and arrow to shoot at me; so I was then obliged to shoot at him first, which I did and killed him.

The poor savage who fled was so frightened with the noise of my piece that he seemed inclined still to fly. I gave him all the signs of encouragement I could think of, and he came nearer, kneeling down every ten or twelve steps. I took him up and made much of him, and comforted him. Then, beckoning him to follow me, I took him to my cave on the farther part of the island. Here, having refreshed him, I made signs for him to lie down to sleep, which the poor creature did. After he had slumbered about half an hour, he came out of the cave, running to me, laying himself down and setting my foot upon his head to let me know he would serve me so long as he lived.

In a little time I began to speak to him and teach him to speak to me; and, first, I let him know his name should be Friday, which was the day I saved his life. I likewise taught him to say "Master," and then let him know that was to be my name. I made a little tent for him, and took in my ladders at night, so that he could no way come at me.

But I needed not this precaution, for never man had a more faithful, loving servant than Friday was to me. I made it my business to teach him everything that was proper to make him useful, especially to make him speak, and he was the aptest scholar that ever was. Indeed, this was the pleasantest year of all the life I led in this

place. I began now to have some use for my tongue again, and, besides the pleasure of talking to Friday, I had a singular satisfaction in the fellow himself. His simple, unfeigned honesty appeared to me more and more every day, and I began really to love the creature; and I believe he loved me more than it was possible for him ever to love anything before.

IV.—The End of Captivity

I was now entered on the seven-and-twentieth year of my captivity on the island. One morning I bade Friday go to the seashore and see if he could find a turtle. He had not been gone long when he came running back like one that felt not the ground, or the steps he set his feet on, and cries out to me, "O master! O sorrow! O bad!"

"What's the matter, Friday?" said I.

"O yonder, there," says he; "one, two, three canoes!"

"Well," says I, "do not be frightened."

However, I saw the poor fellow was most terribly scared, for nothing ran in his head but that the savages were come back to look for him, and would cut him in pieces and eat him. I comforted him, and told him I was in as much danger as he. Then I went up the hill and found quickly by my glass that there were one-and-twenty savages, whose business seemed to be a triumphant banquet upon three human bodies. I came down again to Friday and, going towards the wretches, sent Friday a little ahead to see what they were doing. He came back and told me that they were eating the flesh of one of their prisoners, and that a bearded man lay bound, whom he said they would kill next.

This fired the very soul within me, and, going to a little rising ground, I turned to Friday and said, "Now, Friday, do exactly as you see me do." So, with a mus-

ket, I took aim at the savages; Friday did the like, and we fired, killing three of them and wounding five more. They were in a dreadful consternation, and after we fired again among the amazed wretches, I made directly towards the poor victim who was lying upon the beach. Loosing him, I found he was a Spaniard. He took pistol and sword from me thankfully, and flew upon his murderers, and, Friday, pursuing the flying wretches, in the end but four of the twenty-one escaped in a canoe.

I was minded to pursue them lest they should return with a greater force and devour us by mere multitude. So, running to a canoe, I bade Friday follow me, but was surprised to find another poor creature lying therein, bound hand and foot. I immediately cut his fastenings and bade Friday tell him of his deliverance. But when Friday came to hear him speak and to look in his face. it would have moved anyone to tears to have seen how Friday kissed him, embraced him, hugged him, cried, danced, sung, and then cried again. It was a good while before I could make him tell me what was the matter, but when he came a little to himself, he told me it was his father. He sat down by the old man a long while, and took his arms and ankles, which were numbed with the binding, and chafed and rubbed them with his hands.

My island was now peopled, and I thought myself rich in subjects. The Spaniard and the old savage had been with us about seven months, sharing in our labours, when, being unable to keep means of deliverance out of my thoughts, I gave them leave to go over in one of the canoes to the mainland, where some of the Spaniard's shipmates were cast away, giving them provisions sufficient for themselves and all the Spaniards, for eight days.

It was no less than eight days I had waited for their return when Friday came to me and called aloud, "Master, master, they are come!" I jumped up and

climbed to the top of the hill, and with my glass plainly made out an English ship, and its long-boat standing in for the shore. I cannot express the joy I was in at seeing a ship, and one that was manned by my own countrymen; but yet I had some secret doubts, bidding me keep on my guard. Presently the boat was run upon the beach, and in all eleven men landed, whereof three were unarmed and bound, whom I could perceive using passionate gestures of entreaty and despair. Presently the seamen were all gone straggling in the woods, leaving the three distressed men under a tree a little distance from me. I resolved to discover myself to them, and marched with Friday towards them, and called aloud in Spanish, "What are ye, gentlemen?" They started up at the noise, and I perceived them about to fly from me, when I spoke to them in English.

"Gentlemen," says I, "do not be surprised at me; perhaps you may have a friend near, when you did not expect it. Can you not put a stranger in the way to help you?"

One of them, looking like one astonished, returned, "Sir, I was captain of that ship; my men have mutinied against me, and have set me on shore in this desolate place with these two men—my mate and a passenger."

He then told me that if two among the mutineers, who were desperate villains, were secured, he believed the rest on shore would return to their duty. He anticipated my proposals in venturing their deliverance by telling me that both he and the ship, if recovered, should be wholly directed by me in everything. Then I gave them muskets, and the mutineers returning, the two villains were killed, and the rest begged for mercy, and joined us. More of them coming ashore, we fell upon them at night, so that at the captain's call they laid down their arms, trusting to the mercy of the governor of the island, for such they supposed me to be.

It now occurred to me that the time of my deliverance

was come, and that it would be easy to bring these fellows in to be hearty in getting possession of the ship. And so it proved, for, the ship being boarded next morning, and the new rebel captain shot, the rest yielded without any more lives lost.

When I saw my deliverance then put visibly into my hands, I was ready to sink down with the surprise, and it was a good while before I could speak a word to the captain, who was in as great an ecstasy as I. After some time, I came dressed in a new habit of the captain's, being still called governor. Being all met, and the captain with me, I caused the prisoners to be brought before me, told them I had got a full account of their villainous behaviour to the captain, and asked of them what they had to say why I should not execute them as pirates. I told them I had resolved to quit the island, but that they, if they went, could only go as prisoners in irons; so that I could not tell what was the best for them, unless they had a mind to take their fate in the island. They seemed thankful for this, and said they would much rather venture to stay than be carried to England to be hanged. So I left it on that issue. When the captain was gone I sent for the men up to me in my apartment and let them into the story of my living there; showed them my fortifications, the way I made my bread, planted my corn; and, in a word, all that was necessary to make them easy. I told them the story, also of the Spaniards that were to be expected, and made them promise to treat them in common with themselves.

I left the next day and went on board the ship with Friday. And thus I left the island the 19th of December, in the year 1686, after eight and twenty years, and, after a long voyage, I arrived in England, the 11th of June, 1687, having been thirty-five years absent.

Captain Singleton

I.—Sailing With the Devil

If I may believe the woman whom I was taught to call mother, I was a little boy about two years old, very well dressed, and had a nurse-maid to attend me, who took me out on a fine summer's evening into the fields towards Islington, to give the child some air; a little girl being with her, of twelve or fourteen years old, that lived in the neighbourhood.

The maid meets with a fellow, her sweetheart; he carries her into a public-house, and while they are toying in there the girl plays about with me in her hand, sometimes in sight, sometimes out of sight, thinking no harm.

Then comes by one of those sort of people who make it their business to spirit away little children, a trade chiefly practised where they found little children well

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Defoe was fifty-nine when he published this remarkable book, in 1720. "Robinson Crusoe" had appeared in the previous year, and "Moll Flanders" came out in 1722. Shrewdness and wit, the study of character, vividness of imagination, and, beyond these, the pure literary style, make "Captain Singleton" a classic in English literature. William the Quaker, the first Quaker in English fiction, has never been surpassed in any later novel, and remains an immortal creation. The clear common sense of this man, the combination of business ability and a real humaneness, the quiet humour which prevails over the stupid barbarity of his pirate companions—who but Defoe could have drawn such a character as the guide, philosopher, and friend of a crew of pirates? Bob Singleton himself, who tells the story with a frankness of extraordinary charm, confessing his willingness for evil courses as readily as his later repentance, is no less striking a personality. By sheer imagination the genius of Defoe makes Singleton's adventures, including the impossible journey across Central Africa, real and credible. The book is a model of fine narrative.

dressed, and for bigger children, to sell them to the plantations.

The woman, pretending to take me up in her arms and play with me, draws the girl a good way from the house, and then bids her go back to the maid, and tell her that a gentlewoman had taken a fancy to the child. And so, while the girl went, she carries me quite away.

From that time, it seems, I was disposed of to a beggar woman, and after that to a gipsy, till I was about six years old.

And this gipsy, though I was continually dragged about with her from one part of the country to the other, never let me want for anything. I called her mother, but she told me at last she was not my mother, but that she bought me for twelve shillings, and that my name was Bob Singleton, not Robert, but plain Bob.

Who my father and mother really were I have never learnt.

When my gipsy mother happened in process of time to be hanged, I was sent to a parish school; and then I was moved from one parish to another, and at Bussleton, near Southampton, the master of a ship took a fancy to me, and though I was not above twelve years old, he carried me to sea with him on a voyage to Newfoundland.

I went several voyages with him, when, coming home from Newfoundland about the year 1695, we were taken by an Algerine rover, which was in its turn taken by two great Portuguese men-of-war.

We were carried into Lisbon, and there my master, the only friend I had in the world, dying of his wounds, I was left starving in a foreign country where I knew nobody, and could not speak a word of the language.

However, an old pilot found me, and, speaking in broken English, asked me if I would go with him.

"Yes," said I, "with all my heart."

For two years I lived with him, and then he got to be master under Don Garcia de Carravallas, captain of a Portuguese galleon, which was bound to Goa in the East Indies. On this voyage I began to get a smattering of the Portuguese tongue and a superficial knowledge of navigation. I also learnt to be an arrant thief and a bad sailor.

I was reputed as mighty diligent and faithful to my master, but I was very far from honest.

Indeed, I had no sense of virtue or religion in me, never having heard much of either, and was growing up apace to be as wicked as anybody could be.

Thieving, lying, swearing, forswearing, joined to the most abominable lewdness, was the stated practice of the ship's crew; adding to it that, with the most insufferable boasts of their own courage, they were, generally speaking, the most complete cowards that I ever met with. And I was exactly fitted for their society.

According to the English proverb, he that is shipped with the devil must sail with the devil; I was among them, and I managed myself as well as I could.

When we came to anchor on the coast of Madagascar to repair some damage to the ship, there happened a most desperate mutiny among the men upon account of a deficiency in their allowance, and I, being full of mischief in my head, readily joined.

Though I was but a boy, as they called me, yet I prompted the mischief all I could, and embarked in it so openly that I escaped very little being hanged in the first and most early part of my life.

For the captain, getting wind of the plot, brought two fellows to confess the particulars, and presently no less than sixteen men were seized and put into irons, whereof I was one.

The captain, who was made desperate by his danger, tried us all, and we were all condemned to die. The gunner and purser were hanged immediately, and I

expected it with the rest. I do not remember any great concern I was under about it, only that I cried very much; for I knew little then of this world, and nothing at all of the next.

However, the captain contented himself with executing these two, and some of the rest, upon their humble submission, were pardoned; but five were ordered to be set on shore on the island and left there, of which I was one.

At our first coming into the island we were terrified exceedingly with the sight of the barbarous people; but when we came to converse with them awhile, we found they were not cannibals, as was reported, but they came and sat down by us, and wondered much at our clothes and arms. Nor did we suffer any harm from them during our whole stay on the island.

Before the ship sailed twenty-three of the crew decided to join us, and the captain, not unwilling to lose them, sent us two barrels of powder, and shot and lead, as well as a great bag of bread.

Being now a considerable number, and in condition to defend ourselves, the first thing we did was to give everyone his hand that we would not separate from one another, but that we would live and die together, that we would be in all things guided by the majority, that we would appoint a captain among us to be our leader, and that we would obey him on pain of death.

II.—A Mad Venture

For two years we remained on the island of Madagascar, for at the beginning we had no vessel large enough to pass the ocean.

I never proposed to speak in the general consultations, but one day I told the company that our best plan was to cruise along the coast in canoes, and seize upon the first vessel we could get that was better than

our own, and so from that to another, till perhaps we might at last get a good ship to carry us wherever we pleased to go.

"Excellent advice," says one of them. "Admirable advice," says another. "Yes, yes," says the third (which was a gunner), "the English dog has given excellent advice, but it is just the way to bring us all to the gallows. To go a-thieving, till from a little vessel we come to a great ship, and so shall we turn downright pirates, the end of which is to be hanged."

"You may call us pirates," says another, "if you will, and if we fall into bad hands we may be used like pirates; but I care not for that. I'll be a pirate or anything, rather than starve here!"

And so they cried all, "Let us have a canoe!"

The gunner, overruled by the rest, submitted; but as we broke up the council, he came to me and very gravely. "My lad," says he, "thou art born to do a world of mischief; thou hast commenced pirate very young; but have a care of the gallows, young man; have a care, I say, for thou wilt be an eminent thief."

I laughed at him, and told him I did not know what I might come to hereafter; but as our case was now, I should make no scruple to take the first ship I came at to get our liberty. I only wished we could see one, and come at her.

When we had made three canoes of some size, we set out on as odd a voyage as ever man went. We were a little fleet of three ships, and an army of between twenty and thirty as dangerous fellows as ever lived. We were bound somewhere and nowhere, for though we knew what we intended to do, we really did not know what we were doing.

We cruised up and down the coast, but no ship came in sight, and at last, with more courage than discretion, more resolution than judgment, we launched for the main coast of Africa.

The voyage was much longer than we expected, and when we were landed upon the continent it seemed the most desolate, desert, and inhospitable country in the world.

It was here that we took one of the rashest and wildest and most desperate resolutions that ever was taken by man; this was to travel overland through the heart of the country, from the coast of Mozambique to the coast of Angola or Guinea, a continent of land of at least 1,800 miles, in which journey we had excessive heats to support, impassable deserts to go over, no carriages, camels, or beasts of any kind to carry our baggage, innumerable wild and ravenous beasts to encounter, such as lions, leopards, tigers, lizards, and elephants; we had nations of savages to encounter, barbarous and brutish to the last degree; hunger and thirst to struggle with, and, in one word, terrors enough to have daunted the stoutest hearts that ever were placed in cases of flesh and blood.

Yet, fearless of all these, we resolved to adventure, and not only did we accomplish our journey, but we came to a river where there were vast quantities of gold.

The hardships and difficulties of our march were much mitigated by a method which I proposed and was found very convenient. This was to quarrel with some of the negro natives, take them as prisoners, and binding them as slaves, cause them to travel with us and make them carry our baggage.

Accordingly, we secured about sixty lusty young fellows as prisoners, for the natives stood in great awe of us because of our firearms, and they not only served us faithfully—the more so as we treated them without harshness—but were of great help in showing us the way, and in conversing with the savages we afterwards met.

When we reached the country where the gold was, we at once agreed, in order that the good harmony and

friendship of our company might be maintained, that however much gold was gotten, it should be brought into one common stock, and equally divided at last, the negroes sharing with the rest.

This was done, and at the end of our long journey we found each man's share amounted to many pounds of gold. We also got a cargo of elephants' teeth.

We parted at the Gold Coast from our black companions on the best of terms. Then most of my comrades went off to the Portuguese factories near Gambia, and I went to Cape Coast Castle, and got passage for England, where I arrived in September.

III.—Quaker and Pirate

I had neither friend nor relation in England, though it was my native country; I had not a person to trust with what I had, or to counsel me to secure or save it; but falling into ill company, and trusting the keeper of a public-house in Rotherhithe with a great part of my money, all that great sum, which I got with so much pains and hazard, was gone in little more than two years' time—spent in all kinds of folly and wickedness.

Then I began to see it was time to think of further adventures, and I next shipped myself, in an evil hour to be sure, on a voyage to Cadiz.

On the coast of Spain I fell in with some masters of mischief, and, among them, one, forwarder than the rest, named Harris, who began an intimate confidence with me, so that we called one another brothers.

This Harris was afterwards captured by an English man-of-war, and, being laid in irons, died of grief and anger.

When we were together, he asked me if I had a mind for an adventure that might make amends for all past misfortunes. I told him, yes, with all my heart; for I

did not care where I went, having nothing to lose, and no one to leave behind me.

He told me, then, there was a brave fellow, whose name was Wilmot, in another English ship which rode in the harbour, who had resolved to mutiny the next morning, and run away with the ship; and that if we could get strength enough among our ship's company, we might do the same.

I liked the proposal very well, but we could not bring our part to perfection. For there were but eleven in our ship who were in the conspiracy, nor could we get any more that we could trust. So that when Wilmot began his work, and secured the ship, and gave the signal to us, we all took a boat and went off to join him.

Being well prepared for all manner of roguery, without the least checks of conscience, I thus embarked with this crew, which at last brought me to consort with the most famous pirates of the age.

I, that was an original thief, and a pirate even by inclination before, was now in my element, and never undertook anything in my life with more particular satisfaction.

Captain Wilmot—for so we now called him—at once stood out for sea, steering for the Canaries, and thence onward to the West Indies. Our ship had twenty-two guns, and we obtained plenty of ammunition from the Spaniards in exchange for bales of English cloth.

We cruised near two years in those seas of the West Indies, chiefly upon the Spaniards—not that we made any difficulty of taking English ships, or Dutch, or French, if they came in our way. But the reason why we meddled as little with English vessels as we could was, first, because if they were ships of any force, we were sure of more resistance from them; and, secondly, because we found the English ships had less booty when taken; for the Spaniards generally had money on board, and that was what we best knew what to do with.

We increased our stock considerably in these two years, having taken 60,000 pieces of gold in one vessel, and 100,000 in another; and being thus first grown rich, we resolved to be strong, too, for we had taken a brigantine, an excellent sea-boat, able to carry twelve guns, and a large Spanish frigate-built ship, which afterwards, by the help of good carpenters, we fitted up to carry twenty-eight guns.

We had also taken two or three sloops from New England and New York, laden with flour, peas, and barrelled beef and pork, going for Jamaica and Barbados, and for more beef we went on shore on the island of Cuba, where we killed as many black cattle as we pleased, though we had very little salt to cure them.

Out of all the prizes we took here we took their powder and bullets, their small-arms and cutlasses; and as for their men, we always took the surgeon and the carpenter, as persons who were of particular use to us upon many occasions; nor were they always unwilling to go with us.

We had one very merry fellow here, a Quaker, whose name was William Walters, whom we took out of a sloop bound from Pennsylvania to Barbados. He was a surgeon and they called him doctor, and we made him go with us, and take all his implements with him. He was a comic fellow indeed, a man of very good solid sense, and an excellent surgeon; but, what was worth all, very good-humoured and pleasant in his conversation, and a bold, stout, brave fellow too, as any we had among us.

I found William not very averse to go along with us, and yet resolved to do it so that it might be apparent he was taken away by force. "Friend," he says, "thou sayest I must go with thee, and it is not in my power to resist thee if I would; but I desire thou wilt oblige the master of the sloop to certify under his hand that I was taken away by force, and against my will." So I

drew up a certificate myself, wherein I wrote that he was taken away by main force, as a prisoner, by a pirate ship; and this was signed by the master and all his men.

"Thou hast dealt friendly by me," says he, when we had brought him aboard, "and I will be plain with thee, whether I came willingly to thee or not. But thou knowest it is not my business to meddle when thou art to fight."

"No, no," says the captain, "but you may meddle a little when we share the money."

"Those things are useful to furnish a surgeon's chest," says William, and smiled, "but I shall be moderate."

In short, William was a most agreeable companion; but he had the better of us in this part, that if we were taken we were sure to be hanged, and he was sure to escape. But he was a sprightly fellow, and fitter to be captain than any of us.

IV.—A Respectable Merchant

We cruised the seas for many years, and after a time William and I had a ship to ourselves with 400 men in authority under us. As for Captain Wilmot, we left him with a large company at Madagascar, while we went on to the East Indies.

At last we had gotten so rich, for we traded in cloves and spices to the merchants, that William one day proposed to me that we should give up the kind of life we had been leading. We were then off the coast of Persia.

"Most people," said William, "leave off trading when they are satisfied of getting, and are rich enough; for nobody trades for the sake of trading; much less do men rob for the sake of thieving. It is natural for men that are abroad to desire to come home again at last, especially when they are grown rich, and so rich as they would know not what to do with more if they had it."

"Well, William," said I, "but you have not explained what you mean by home. Why, man, I am at home; here is my habitation; I never had any other in my lifetime; I was a kind of charity school-boy; so that I can have no desire of going anywhere for being rich or poor; for I have nowhere to go."

"Why," says William, looking a little confused, "hast thou no relatives or friends in England? No acquaintance; none that thou hast any kindness or any remains of respect for?"

"Not I, William," said I, "no more than I have in the court of the Great Mogul. Yet I do not say I like this roving, cruising life so well as never to give it over. Say anything to me, I will take it kindly." For I could see he was troubled, and I began to be moved by his gravity.

"There is something to be thought of beyond this way of life," says William.

"Why, what is that," said I, "except it be death?"

"It is repentance."

"Why," says I, "did you ever know a pirate repent?"

At this he was startled a little, and returned.

"At the gallows I have known one, and I hope thou wilt be the second."

He spoke this very affectionately, with an appearance of concern for me.

"My proposal," William went on, "is for thy good as well as my own. We may put an end to this kind of life, and repent."

"Look you, William," says I, "let me have your proposal for putting an end to our present way of living first, and you and I will talk of the other afterwards."

"Nay," says William, "thou art in the right there; we must never talk of repenting while we continue pirates."

"Well," says I, "William, that's what I meant; for if we must not reform, as well as be sorry for what is

done, I have no notion what repentance means; the nature of the thing seems to tell me that the first step we have to take is to break off this wretched course. Dost thou think it practicable for us to put an end to our unhappy way of living, and get off?"

"Yes," says he, "I think it very practicable."

We were then anchored off the city of Bassorah, and one night William and I went ashore, and sent a note to the boatswain telling him we were betrayed and bidding him make off with the ship.

By this means we frighted the rogues our comrades; and we had nothing to do then but to consider how to convert our treasure into things proper to make us look like merchants, as we were now to be, and not like freebooters, as we really had been.

Then we clothed ourselves like Armenian merchants, and after many days reached Venice; and at last we agreed to go to London. For William had a sister whom he was anxious to see once more.

So we came to England, and some time later I married William's sister, with whom I am much more happy than I deserve.

CHARLES DICKENS

Barnaby Rudge

I.—Barnaby and the Robber

In the year 1775 there stood upon the borders of Epping Forest, in the village of Chigwell, about twelve miles from London, a house of public entertainment called the Maypole, kept by John Willet, a large-headed man with a fat face, of profound obstinacy and slowness

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Charles Dickens, son of a clerk in the Navy Pay Office, was born at Landport on February 7, 1812. Soon afterwards the family removed to Chatham and then to London. With all their efforts, they failed to keep out of distress, and at the age of nine Dickens was employed at a blacking factory. With the coming of brighter days, he was sent back to school; afterwards a place was found for him in a solicitor's office. In the meantime, his father had obtained a position as reporter on the "Morning Herald," and Dickens, too, resolved to try his fortune in that direction. Teaching himself shorthand, and studying diligently at the British Museum, at the age of twenty-two he secured permanent employment on the staff of a London paper. "Barnaby Rudge," the fifth of Dickens's novels, appeared serially in "Master Humphrey's Clock" during 1841. It thus followed "The Old Curiosity Shop," the character of Master Humphrey being revived merely to introduce the new story, and on its conclusion "The Clock" was stopped for ever. In 1849 "Barnaby Rudge" was published in book form. Written primarily to express the author's abhorrence of capital punishment, from the use he made of the Gordon Riots of 1780, "Barnaby Rudge," like "A Tale of Two Cities," may be considered an historical work. It is more of a story than any of its predecessors. Lord George Gordon, the instigator of the riots, died a prisoner in the Tower of London, after making public renunciation of Christianity in favour of the Jewish religion. "The raven in this story," said Dickens, "is a compound of two originals, of whom I have been the proud possessor." Dickens died at Gad's Hill on June 9, 1870, having written fourteen novels and a great number of short stories and sketches.

of apprehension, combined with a very strong reliance upon his own merits.

From this inn, Gabriel Varden, stout-hearted old locksmith of Clerkenwell, jogged steadily home on a chaise, half sleeping and half waking, on a certain rough evening in March.

A loud cry roused him with a start, just where London begins, and he descried a man extended in an apparently lifeless state wounded upon the pathway, and, hovering round him, another person, with a torch in his hand, which he waved in the air with a wild impatience.

"What's here to do?" said the old locksmith. "How's this? What, Barnaby! You know me, Barnaby?"

The bearer of the torch nodded, not once or twice, but a score of times, with a fantastic exaggeration.

"How came it here?" demanded Varden, pointing to the body.

"Steel, steel, steel!" Barnaby replied fiercely, imitating the thrust of a sword.

"Is he robbed?" said the blacksmith.

Barnaby caught him by the arm, and nodded "Yes," pointing towards the city.

"Oh!" said the old man. "The robber made off that way, did he? Now let's see what can be done."

They covered the wounded man with Varden's great-coat, and carried him to Mrs. Rudge's house hard by. On his way home Gabriel congratulated himself on having an adventure which would silence Mrs. Varden on the subject of the Maypole for that night, or there was no faith in woman.

But Mrs. Varden was a lady of uncertain temper, and she was on this occasion so ill-tempered, and put herself to so much anxiety and agitation, aided and abetted by her shrewish hand-maiden, Miggs, that next morning she was, she said, too much indisposed to rise. The

disconsolate locksmith had, therefore, to deliver himself of his story of the night's experiences to his daughter, buxom, bewitching Dolly, the very pink and pattern of good looks, and the despair of the youth of the neighbourhood.

Calling next day in the evening, Gabriel Varden learnt the wounded man was better, and would shortly be removed.

Varden chatted as an old friend with Barnaby's mother. He knew the Maypole story of the widow Rudge—how her husband, employed at Chigwell, and his master had been murdered; and how her son, born upon the very day the deed was known, bore upon his wrist a smear of blood but half washed out.

"Why, what's that?" said the locksmith suddenly. "Is that Barnaby tapping at the door?"

"No," returned the widow; "it was in the street, I think. Hark! 'Tis someone knocking softly at the shutter."

"Some thief or ruffian," said the locksmith. "Give me a light."

"No, no," she returned hastily. "I would rather go myself, alone."

She left the room, and Varden heard the sound of whispers without. Then the words "My God!" came, uttered in a voice dreadful to hear.

Varden rushed out. A look of terror was on the woman's face, and before her stood a man, of sinister appearance, whom the locksmith had passed on the road from Chigwell the previous night.

The man fled, but the locksmith was after him and would have held him but for the widow, who clutched his arms.

"The other way—the other way!" she cried. "Do not touch him, on your life! He carries other lives besides his own. Don't ask what it means. He is not to be followed or stopped! Come back!"

"The other way!" said the locksmith. "Why, there he goes!"

The old man looked at her in wonder, and let her draw him into the house. Still that look of terror was on her face, as she implored him not to question her.

Presently she withdrew, and left him in his perplexity alone, and Barnaby came in.

"I have been asleep," said the idiot, with widely opened eyes. "There have been great faces coming and going—close to my face, and then a mile away. That's sleep, eh? I dreamed just now that something—it was in the shape of a man—followed me and wouldn't let me be. It came creeping on to worry me, nearer and nearer. I ran faster, leaped, sprang out of bed and to the window, and there in the street below——"

"Halloa, halloa, halloa! Bow, wow, wow!" cried a hoarse voice. "What's the matter here? Halloa!"

The locksmith started, and there was Grip, a large raven, Barnaby's close companion, perched on the top of a chair.

"Halloa, halloa, halloa! Keep up your spirits! Never say die!" the bird went on, in a hoarse voice. "Bow, wow, wow!" And then he began to whistle.

The locksmith said "Good-night," and went his way home, disturbed in thought.

"In league with that ill-looking figure that might have fallen from a gibbet. He listening and hiding here. Barnaby first upon the spot last night. Can she, who has always borne so fair a name, be guilty of such crimes in secret?" said the locksmith, musing. "Heaven forgive me if I am wrong, and send me just thoughts."

II.—Barnaby Is Enrolled

It is seven in the forenoon, on June 2, 1780, and Barnaby and his mother, who had travelled to London to escape that unwelcome visitor whom Varden had noticed,

were resting in one of the recesses of Westminster Bridge.

A vast throng of persons were crossing the river to the Surrey shore in unusual haste and excitement, and nearly every man in this great concourse wore in his hat a blue cockade.

When the bridge was clear, which was not till nearly two hours had elapsed, the widow inquired of an old man what was the meaning of the great assemblage.

"Why, haven't you heard?" he returned. "This is the day Lord George Gordon presents the petition against the Catholics, and his lordship has declared he won't present it to the House of Commons at all unless it is attended to the door by forty thousand good men and true, at least. There's a crowd for you!"

"A crowd, indeed!" said Barnaby. "Do you hear that, mother? That's a brave crowd he talks of. Come!"

"Not to join it!" cried his mother. "You don't know what mischief they may do, or where they may lead you. Dear Barnaby, for my sake——"

"For your sake!" he answered. "It *is* for your sake, mother. Here's a brave crowd! Come—or wait till I come back! Yes, yes, wait here!"

A stranger gave Barnaby a blue cockade and bade him wear it, and while he was still fixing it in his hat Lord Gordon and his secretary, Gashford, passed, and then turned back.

"You lag behind, friend, and are late," said Lord George. "It's past ten now. Didn't you know the hour of assemblage was ten o'clock?"

Barnaby shook his head, and looked vacantly from one to the other.

"He cannot tell you, sir," the widow interposed. "It's no use to ask him. We know nothing of these matters. This is my son—my poor, afflicted son, dearer to me than my own life. He is not in his right senses—he is not, indeed."

"He has surely no appearance," said Lord George, whispering in his secretary's ear, "of being deranged. We must not construe any trifling peculiarity into madness. You desire to make one of this body?" he added, addressing Barnaby. "And intended to make one, did you?"

"Yes, yes," said Barnaby, with sparkling eyes. "To be sure, I did. I told her so myself."

"Then follow me," replied Lord George, "and you shall have your wish."

Barnaby kissed his mother tenderly, and telling her their fortunes were made now, did as he was desired.

They hastened on to St. George's Fields, where the vast army of men was drawn up in sections. Doubtless there were honest zealots sprinkled here and there, but for the most part the throng was composed of the very scum and refuse of London.

Barnaby was acclaimed by a man in the ranks, Hugh, the rough hostler of the Maypole, whom Barnaby in his frequent wanderings had long known.

"What! you wear the colour, do you? Fall in, Barnaby. You shall march between me and Dennis, and you shall carry," said Hugh, taking a flag from the hand of a tired man, "the gayest silken streamer in this valiant army."

"In the name of God, no!" shrieked the widow, who had followed in pursuit and now darted forward. "Barnaby, my lord, he'll come back—Barnaby!"

"Women in the field!" cried Hugh, stepping between them, and holding her off with his outstretched hand. "It's against all orders—ladies carrying off our gallant soldiers from their duty. Give the word of command, captain."

The words, "Form! March!" rang out.

She was thrown to the ground; the whole field was in motion; Barnaby was whirled away into the heart of a dense mass of men, and the widow saw him no more.

Barnaby himself, heedless of the weight of the great banner he carried, marched proud, happy, and elated past all telling. Hugh was at his side, and next to Hugh came a squat, thick-set personage called Dennis, who, unknown to his companions, was no other than the public hangman.

"I wish I could see her somewhere," said Barnaby, looking anxiously around. "She would be proud to see me now, eh, Hugh? She'd cry with joy, I know she would."

"Why, what palaver's this?" asked Mr. Dennis, with supreme disdain. "We ain't got no sentimental members among us, I hope."

"Don't be uneasy, brother," cried Hugh, "he's only talking of his mother."

"His mother!" growled Mr. Dennis, with a strong oath, and in tones of deep disgust. "And have I combined myself with this here section, and turned out on this here memorable day, to hear men talk about their mothers?"

"Barnaby's right," cried Hugh, with a grin, "and I say it. Lookee, bold lad, if she's not here to see it's because I've provided for her, and sent half-a-dozen gentlemen, every one of 'em with a blue flag, to take her to a grand house all hung round with gold and silver banners, where she'll wait till you come and and want for nothing. And we'll get money for her. Money, cocked hats, and gold lace will all belong to us if we are true to that noble gentleman, if we carry our flags and keep 'em safe. That's all we've got to do.

"Don't you see, man," Hugh whispered to Dennis, "that the lad's a natural, and can be got to do anything if you take him the right way? He's worth a dozen men in earnest, as you'd find if you tried a fall with him. You'll soon see whether he's of use or not."

Mr. Dennis received this explanation with many nods and winks, and softened his behaviour towards Barnaby from that moment.

Hugh was right. It was Barnaby who stood his ground, and grasped his pole more firmly when the Guards came out to clear the mob away from Westminster.

One soldier came spurring on, cutting at the hands of those who would have forced his charger back, and still Barnaby, without retreating an inch, waited for his coming. Some called to him to fly, when the pole swept the air above the people's heads, and the man's saddle was empty in an instant.

Then he and Hugh turned and fled, the crowd opening and closing so quickly that there was no clue to the course they had taken.

III.—The Storming of Newgate

For several days London was in the hands of the rioters. Catholic chapels were burned, the private residences of Catholics were sacked. From the moment of the first outbreak at Westminster every symptom of order vanished. Fifty resolute men might have turned the rioters; a single company of soldiers could have scattered them like dust; but no man interposed, no authority restrained them.

But Barnaby, bold Barnaby, had been taken. Left behind at the resort of the rioters by Hugh, who led a body of men to Chigwell, he had been captured by the soldiers, a proclamation of the Privy Council having at last encouraged the magistrates to set the military in motion for the arrest of certain ringleaders.

He was placed in Newgate and heavily ironed, and presently Grip, with drooping head and plumes rough and tumbled, was thrust into his cell.

Another man was also taken and placed in Newgate on that day, and presently he and Barnaby stood staring at each other, face to face. Suddenly Barnaby laid hands upon him, and cried, "Ah, I know! You are the robber!"

The other struggled with him silently, but finding the

young man too strong for him, raised his eyes and said, "I am your father."

Barnaby released his hold, fell back, and looked at him aghast. Then he sprang towards him, put his arms about his neck, and pressed his head against his cheek. He never learnt that his father, supposed to have been murdered, was himself a murderer. This was the widow's dreadful secret.

And now Hugh, with a huge army, was at the gates of Newgate, bent on rescue. He had returned, to find Barnaby taken, and at once announced that the prison must be stormed. In vain the military commanders tried to rouse the magistrates, and in particular the Lord Mayor; no orders were given, and the soldiers could do nothing within the precincts of the city without the warrant of the civil authorities.

In a dense mass the rioters halted before the prison-gate. All those who had already been conspicuous were there, and others who had friends or relatives within the jail hastened to the attack.

Hugh had brought, by force, old Gabriel Varden to pick the lock of the great door, but this the sturdy locksmith resolutely refused to do.

"You have got some friends of ours in your custody, master," Hugh called out to the head jailer, who had appeared on the roof. "Deliver up our friends, and you may keep the rest."

"It's my duty to keep them all. I shall do my duty," replied the jailer, firmly.

A shower of stones compelled the keeper of the jail to retire.

Gabriel Varden was urged by blows, by offers of reward, and by threats of instant death to do the office the rioters required of him, and all in vain. He was knocked down, was up again, buffeting with a score of them. He had never loved his life so well as then, but nothing could move him

The cry was raised, "You lose time. Remember the prisoners! Remember Barnaby!" And the crowd left the locksmith, to gather fuel, for an entrance was to be forced by fire. Furniture from the prison lodge was piled up in a monstrous heap and set blazing, oil was poured on, and at last the great gate yielded to the flames. It settled deeper in the red-hot cinders, tottered, and was down.

Hugh leaped upon the blazing heap, and dashed into the jail. The hangman followed. And then so many rushed upon their track that the fire got trodden down. There was no need of it now, for, inside and out, the prison was soon in flames.

Barnaby and his father were quickly released, and passed from hand to hand into the street. Soon all the wretched inmates of the jail were free, except four condemned to die whom Dennis kept under guard. And these Hugh roughly insisted on liberating, to the sullen anger of the hangman.

"You won't let these men alone, and leave 'em to me? You've no respect for nothing, haven't you?" said Dennis, and with a scowl he disappeared.

Three hundred prisoners in all were released from Newgate, and many of these returned to haunt the place of their captivity, and were retaken. The day after the storming of Newgate, the mob having now had London at its mercy for a week, the authorities at last took serious action, and at nightfall the military held the streets.

Hugh and Barnaby and old Rudge had taken refuge in a rough out-house in the outskirts of London, where they were wont to rest, when Dennis stood before them; he had not been seen since the storming of Newgate.

A few minutes later, and the shed was filled with soldiers, while a body of horse galloping into the field drew up before it.

"Here!" said Dennis, "it's them two young ones, gentlemen, that the proclamation puts a price on. This

other's an escaped felon. I'm sorry for it, brother," he added, addressing himself to Hugh; "but you've brought it on yourself; you forced me to do it; you wouldn't respect the soundest constitutional principles, you know; you went and wiolated the wery framework of society."

Barnaby and his father were carried off by one road in the centre of a body of foot-soldiers; Hugh, fast bound upon a horse, was taken by another.

IV.—The Fate of the Rioters

The riots had been stamped out, and once more the city was quiet.

Barnaby sat in his dungeon. Beside him, with his hand in hers, sat his mother; worn and altered, full of grief, and heavy-hearted, but the same to him.

"Mother," he said, "how long—how many days and nights—shall I be kept here?"

"Not many, dear. I hope not many."

"If they kill me—they may; I heard it said—what will become of Grip?"

The sound of the word suggested to the raven his old phrase, "Never say die!" But he stopped short in the middle of it as if he lacked the heart to get through the shortest sentence.

"Will they take his life as well as mine?" said Barnaby. "I wish they would. If you and I and he could die together, there would be none to feel sorry, or to grieve for us. Don't you cry for me. They said that I am bold, and so I am, and so I will be."

The turnkey came to close the cells for the night, the widow tore herself away, and Barnaby was alone.

He was to die. There was no hope. They had tried to save him. The locksmith had carried petitions and memorials to the fountain-head with his own hands. But the well was not one of mercy, and Barnaby was to die.

From the first, his mother had never left him, save at night; and, with her beside him, he was contented.

"They call me silly, mother. They shall see—to-morrow."

Dennis and Hugh were in the courtyard. "No reprieve, no reprieve! Nobody comes near us. There's only the night left now!" moaned Dennis. "Do you think they'll reprieve me in the night, brother? I've known reprieves come in the night afore now. Don't you think there's a good chance yet? Don't you? Say you do."

"You ought to be the best instead of the worst," said Hugh, stopping before him. "Ha, ha, ha! See the hangman when it comes home to him."

The clock struck. Barnaby looked in his mother's face, and saw that the time had come. After a long embrace he rushed away, and they carried her away, insensible.

"See the hangman when it comes home to him!" cried Hugh, as Dennis, still moaning, fell down in a fit. "Courage, bold Barnaby, what care we? A man can die but once. If you wake in the night, sing that out lustily, and fall asleep again."

The time wore on. Five o'clock had struck—six—seven—and eight. They were to die at noon, and in the crowd without it was said they could tell the hangman, when he came out, by his being the shorter one, and that the man who was to suffer with him was named Hugh; and that it was Barnaby Rudge who would be hanged in Bloomsbury Square.

At the first stroke of twelve the prison bell began to toll, and the three were brought forth into the yard together.

Barnaby was the only one who had washed or trimmed himself that morning. He still wore the broken peacock's feathers in his hat; and all his usual scraps of finery were carefully disposed about his person.

"What cheer, Barnaby?" cried Hugh. "Don't be downcast, lad. Leave that to *him*," he added, with a nod in the direction of Dennis, held up between two men.

"Bless you!" cried Barnaby, "I'm not frightened, Hugh. I'm quite happy. Look at me! Am I afraid to die? Will they see *me* tremble?"

"I'd say this," said Hugh, wringing Barnaby by the hand, and looking round at the officers and functionaries gathered in the yard, "that if I had ten lives to lose I'd lay them all down to save this one. This one that will be lost through mine!"

"Not through you," said Barnaby mildly. "Don't say that. You were not to blame. You have always been very good to me. Hugh, we shall know what makes the stars shine *now!*"

Hugh spoke no more, but moved onward in his place with a careless air, listening as he went to the service for the dead. As soon as he had passed the door, his miserable associate was carried out; and the crowd beheld the rest. Barnaby would have mounted the steps at the same time, but he was restrained, as he was to undergo the sentence elsewhere.

It was only just when the cart was starting that the courier reached the jail with the reprieve. All night Gabriel Varden and his friends had been at work; they had gone to the young Prince of Wales, and even to the ante-chamber of the king himself. Successful, at last, in awakening an interest in his favour, they had an interview with the minister in his bed as late as eight o'clock that morning. The result of a searching inquiry was that, between eleven and twelve o'clock, a free pardon to Barnaby Rudge was made out and signed, and Gabriel Varden had the grateful task of bringing him home in triumph with an enthusiastic mob.

"I needn't say," observed the locksmith, when his house in Clerkenwell was reached at last, and he and Barnaby were safe within, "that, except among ourselves,

I didn't want to make a triumph of it. But directly we got into the street, we were known, and the hub-bub began. Of the two, and after experience of both, I think I'd rather be taken out of my house by a crowd of enemies than escorted home by a mob of friends!"

At last the crowd dispersed. And Barnaby stretched himself on the ground beside his mother's couch, and fell into a deep sleep.

Bleak House

I.—In Chancery

LONDON. Implacable November weather. The Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall. Fog everywhere, and at the very heart of the fog sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery. The case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce drones on. No man alive knows what it means. It has passed into a joke. It has been death to many, but it is a joke in the profession.

Mr. Kenge (of Kenge and Carboy, solicitors, Lincoln's Inn) first mentioned Jarndyce and Jarndyce to me, and told me that the costs already amounted to from sixty to seventy thousand pounds.

"Bleak House," a story with a purpose, like most of Dickens's works, was published when the author was forty years old. The object of the story was to ventilate the monstrous injustice wrought by delays in the old Court of Chancery, which defeated all the purposes of a court of justice. Many of the characters, who, though famous, are not essential to the development of the story, were drawn from real life. Turveydrop was suggested by George IV., and Inspector Bucket was a friend of the author in the Metropolitan Police Force. Harold Skimpole was identified with Leigh Hunt. Dickens himself admitted the resemblance; but only in so far as none of Skimpole's vices could be attributed to his prototype. The original of Bleak House was a country mansion in Hertfordshire, near St. Albans, though it is usually said to be a summer residence of the novelist at Broadstairs.

My godmother, who brought me up, was just dead, and Mr. Kenge came to tell me that Mr. Jarndyce proposed, knowing my desolate position, that I should go to a first-rate school, where my education should be completed and my comfort secured. What did I say to this? What could I say but accept the proposal thankfully?

I passed at this school six happy, quiet years, and then one day came a note from Kenge and Carboy, mentioning that their client, Mr. Jarndyce, being in the house, desired my services as an eligible companion to this young lady.

So I said good-bye to the school and went to London, and was driven to Mr. Kenge's office. He was not altered, but he was surprised to see how altered I was, and appeared quite pleased.

"As you are going to be the companion of the young lady who is now in the Chancellor's private room, Miss Summerson," he said, "we thought it well that you should be in attendance also."

Mr. Kenge gave me his arm, and we went out of his office and into the court, and then into a comfortable sort of room where a young lady and a young gentleman were standing talking.

They looked up when I came in, and I saw in the young lady a beautiful girl, with rich golden hair, and a bright, innocent, trusting face.

"Miss Ada," said Mr. Kenge, "this is Miss Summerson."

She came to meet me with a smile of welcome and her hand extended, but seemed to change her mind in a moment, and kissed me.

The young gentleman was her distant cousin, she told me, and his name Richard Carstone. He was a handsome youth, and after she had called him up to where we sat, he stood by us, talking gaily, like a light-hearted boy. He was very young, not more than nineteen then, but nearly two years older than she was. They were both orphans, and had never met before that day. Our all

three coming together for the first time in such an unusual place was a thing to talk about, and we talked about it.

Presently we heard a bustle, and Mr. Kenge said that the court had risen, and soon after we all followed him into the next room. There was the Lord Chancellor sitting in an armchair at the table, and his manner was both courtly and kind.

"Miss Clare," said his lordship. "Miss Ada Clare?" Mr. Kenge presented her.

"The Jarndyce in question," said the Lord Chancellor, turning over papers, "is Jarndyce of Bleak House—a dreary name."

"But not a dreary place, my lord," said Mr. Kenge.

"Mr. Jarndyce of Bleak House is not married?" said his lordship.

"He is not, my lord," said Mr. Kenge.

"Young Mr. Richard Carstone is present?" said the Lord Chancellor.

Richard bowed and stepped forward.

"Mr. Jarndyce of Bleak House, my lord," Mr. Kenge observed, "if I may venture to remind your lordship, provides a suitable companion for——"

"For Mr. Richard Carstone!" I thought I heard his lordship say in a low voice.

"For Miss Ada Clare. This is the young lady, Miss Esther Summerson."

"Miss Summerson is not related to any party in the cause, I think."

"No, my lord."

"Very well," said his lordship, after taking Miss Ada aside and asking her if she thought she would be happy at Bleak House. "I shall make the order. Mr. Jarndyce of Bleak House has chosen, so far as I may judge, a very good companion for the young lady, and the arrangement seems the best of which the circumstances admit."

He dismissed us pleasantly and we all went out. As

we stood for a minute, waiting for Mr. Kenge, a curious little old woman, Miss Flite, in a squeezed bonnet, and carrying a reticule, came curtsying and smiling up to us, with an air of great ceremony.

"Oh!" said she, "The wards in Jarndyce. Very happy, I am sure, to have the honour. It is a good omen for youth, and hope, and beauty when they find themselves in this place, and don't know what's to come of it."

"Mad!" whispered Richard, not thinking she could hear him.

"Right! Mad, young gentleman," she returned quickly. "I was a ward myself. I was not mad at that time. I had youth and hope; I believe beauty. It matters very little now. Neither of the three served, or saved me. I have the honour to attend court regularly. I expect a judgment. On the Day of Judgment. I have discovered that the sixth seal mentioned in the Revelations is the great seal. Pray accept my blessing."

Mr. Kenge coming up, the poor old lady went on. "I shall confer estates on both. Shortly. On the Day of Judgment. This is a good omen for you. Accept my blessing."

We left her at the bottom of the stairs. She was still saying, with a curtsy, and a smile between every little sentence, "Youth. And hope. And beauty. And Chancery."

The morning after, walking out early, we met the old lady again, smiling and saying in her air of patronage, "The wards in Jarndyce! Ve-ry happy, I am sure! Pray come and see my lodgings. It will be a good omen for me. Youth, and hope, and beauty, are very seldom there."

She took my hand and beckoned Richard and Ada to come too, and in a few moments she was at home.

She had stopped at a shop over which was written, "Krook, Rag and Bottle Warehouse." Inside was an

old man in spectacles and a hair cap, and entering the shop the little old lady presented him to us.

"My landlord, Krook," she said. "He is called among the neighbours the Lord Chancellor. His shop is called the Court of Chancery."

She lived at the top of the house in a room from which she had a glimpse of the roof of Lincoln's Inn Hall, and this seemed to be her principal inducement for living there.

II.—Bleak House

We drove down to Bleak House, in Hertfordshire, next day, and all three of us were anxious and nervous when the night closed in, and the driver, pointing to a light sparkling on the top of a hill, cried, "That's Bleak House!"

"Ada, my love, Esther, my dear, you are welcome. Rick, if I had a hand to spare at present I would give it you!"

The gentleman who said these words in a clear, hospitable voice, kissed us both in a fatherly way, and bore us across the hall into a ruddy little room, all in a glow with a blazing fire.

"Now, Rick!" said he, "I have a hand at liberty. A word in earnest is as good as a speech. I am heartily glad to see you. You are at home. Warm yourself!"

While he spoke I glanced at his face. It was a handsome face, full of change and motion; and his hair was a silvered iron grey. I took him to be nearer sixty than fifty, but he was upright, hearty, and robust.

So this was our coming to Bleak House.

The very next morning I was installed as housekeeper and presented with two bunches of keys—a large bunch for the housekeeping and a little bunch for the cellars. I could not help trembling when I met Mr. Jarndyce, for I knew it was he who had done everything for me since my godmother's death.

"Nonsense!" he said. "I hear of a good little orphan girl without a protector, and I take it into my head to be that protector. She grows up, and more than justifies my good opinion, and I remain her guardian and her friend. What is there in all this?"

He soon began to talk to me confidentially as if I had been in the habit of conversing with him every morning for I don't know how long.

"Of course, Esther," he said, "you don't understand this Chancery business?"

I shook my head.

"I don't know who does," he returned. "The lawyers have twisted it into such a state of bedevilment that the original merits of the case have long disappeared. Its about a will, and the trusts under a will—or it was once. It's about nothing but costs now. It was about a will when it was about anything. A certain Jarndyce, in an evil hour, made a great fortune and made a great will. In the question how the trusts under that will are to be administered, the fortune left by the will is squandered away; the legatees under the will are reduced to such a miserable condition that they would be sufficiently punished if they had committed an enormous crime in having money left them, and the will itself is made a dead letter. All through the deplorable cause everybody must have copies, over and over again, of everything that has accumulated about it in the way of cartloads of papers, and must go down the middle and up again, through such an infernal country-dance of costs and fees and nonsense and corruption as was never dreamed of in the wildest visions of a witch's sabbath. And we can't get out of the suit on any terms, for we are made parties to it, and *must be* parties to it, whether we like it or not. But it won't do to think of it! Thinking of it drove my great-uncle, poor Tom Jarndyce, to blow his brains out."

"I hope sir—" said I.

"I think you had better call me Guardian, my dear."

"I hope, Guardian," said I, giving the housekeeping keys the least shake in the world, "that you may not be trusting too much to my discretion. I am not clever, and that's the truth."

"You are clever enough to be the good little woman of our lives here, my dear," he returned playfully; "the little old woman of the rhyme, who sweeps the cobwebs of the sky, and you will sweep them out of *our* sky in the course of your housekeeping, Esther."

This was the beginning of my being called Old Woman, and Mother Hubbard, and Dame Durden, and so many names of that sort, that my own soon became quite lost.

One of the things I noticed from the first about my guardian was that, though he was always doing a thousand acts of kindness, he could not bear any acknowledgments.

We had somehow got to see more of Miss Flite on our visits to London: for the Lord Chancellor always had to be consulted before Richard could settle in any profession, and as Richard first wanted to be a doctor and then tired of that in favour of the army, there were several consultations. I remember one visit because it was the first time we met Mr. Woodcourt.

My guardian and Ada and I heard of Miss Flite having been ill, and when we called we found a medical gentleman attending her in her garret in Lincoln's Inn.

Miss Flite dropped a general curtsy.

"Honoured, indeed," she said, "by another visit from the wards in Jarndyce! Very happy to receive Jarndyce of Bleak House beneath my humble roof!"

"Has she been very ill?" asked Mr. Jarndyce in a whisper of the doctor.

"Oh, decidedly unwell!" she answered confidentially. "Not pain, you know—trouble. Only Mr. Woodcourt knows how much. My physician, Mr. Woodcourt"—with great stateliness—"The wards in Jarndyce; Jarn-

dyce of Bleak House. The kindest physician in the college," she whispered to me. "I expect a judgment. On the Day of Judgment. And shall then confer estates."

"She will be as well, in a day or two," said Mr. Woodcourt, with an observant smile, "as she ever will be. Have you heard of her good fortune?"

"Most extraordinary!" said Miss Flite. "Every Saturday Kenge and Carboy place a paper of shillings in my hand. Always the same number. One for every day in the week. *I* think that the Lord Chancellor forwards them. Until the judgment I expect is given."

My guardian was contemplating Miss Flite's birds, and I had no need to look beyond him.

III.—I Am Made Happy

I sometimes thought that Mr. Woodcourt loved me, and that, if he had been richer, he would perhaps have told me that he loved me before he went away. I had thought sometimes that if he had done so I should have been glad. As it was, he went to the East Indies, and later we read in the papers of a great shipwreck, that Allan Woodcourt had worked like a hero to save the drowning, and succour the survivors.

I had been ill when my dear guardian asked me one day if I would care to read something he had written, and I said "Yes." There was estrangement at that time between Richard and Mr. Jarndyce, for the unhappy boy had taken it into his head that the case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce would yet be settled, and would bring him fortune, and this kept him from devoting himself seriously to any profession. Of course, he and my darling Ada had fallen in love, and my guardian insisting on their waiting till Richard was earning some income before any engagement could be recognised, increased the estrangement. I knew, to my distress, that Richard suspected

my guardian of having a conflicting claim in the horrible lawsuit and this made him think unjustly of Mr. Jarndyce.

I read the letter. It was so impressive in its love for me, and in the unselfish caution it gave me, that my eyes were too often blinded to read much at a time. But I read it through three times before I laid it down. It asked me would I be the mistress of Bleak House. It was not a love-letter, though it expressed so much love, but was written just as he would at any time have spoken to me.

I felt that to devote my life to his happiness was to thank him poorly for all he had done for me. Still I cried very much; not only in the fulness of my heart after reading the letter, but as if something for which there was no name or distinct idea were lost to me. I was very happy, very thankful, very hopeful, but I cried very much.

On entering the breakfast-room next morning I found my guardian just as usual; quite as frank, as open, as free. I thought he might speak to me about the letter, but he never did.

At the end of a week I went to him and said, rather hesitating and trembling, "Guardian, when would you like to have the answer to the letter?"

"When it's ready, my dear," he replied.

"I think it's ready," said I, "and I have brought it myself."

I put my two arms around his neck and kissed him, and he said was this the mistress of Bleak House? And I said "Yes," and it made no difference presently, and I said nothing to my pet, Ada, about it.

It was a few days after this, when Mr. Vholes, the attorney whom Richard employed to watch his interests, called at Bleak House, and told us that his client was very embarrassed financially, and so thought of throwing up his commission in the army.

To avert this I went down to Deal and found Richard alone in the barracks. He was writing at a table, with a great confusion of clothes, tin cases, books, boots, and brushes strewn all about the floor. So worn and haggard he looked, even in the fulness of his handsome youth!

My mission was quite fruitless.

"No, Dame Durden! Two subjects I forbid. The first is John Jarndyce. The second, you know what. Call it madness, and I tell you I can't help it now, and can't be sane. But it is no such thing; it is the one object I have to pursue."

He went on to tell me that it was impossible to remain a soldier; that, apart from debts and duns, he took no interest in his employment and was not fit for it. He showed me papers to prove that his retirement was arranged. Knowing I had done no good by coming down, I prepared to return to London on the morrow.

There was some excitement in the town by reason of the arrival of a big Indiaman, and, as it happened, amongst those who came on shore from the ship was Mr. Allan Woodcourt. I met him in the hotel where I was staying, and he seemed quite pleased to see me. He was glad to meet Richard again, too, and promised, on my asking him, to befriend Richard in London.

IV.—End of Jarndyce and Jarndyce

Richard always declared that it was Ada he meant to see righted, no less than himself, and his anxiety on that point so impresed Mr. Woodcourt that he told me about it. It revived a fear I had had before, that my dear girl's little property might be absorbed by Mr. Vholes, and that Richard's justification to himself would be this.

So I went up to London to see Richard, who now

lived in Symond's Inn, and my darling Ada went with me. He was poring over a table covered with dusty papers, but he received us very affectionately.

I noticed, as he passed his two hands over his head, how sunken and how large his eyes appeared, and how dry his lips were. He spoke of the case half-hopefully, half-despondently, "Either the suit must be ended, Esther, or the suitor. But it shall be the suit—the suit." Then he took a few turns up and down, and sank upon the sofa. "I get so tired," he said gloomily. "It is such weary, weary work."

"Esther, dear," Ada said, very quietly, "I am not going home again. Never any more. I am going to stay with my dear husband. We have been married above two months. Go home without me, my own Esther; I shall never go home any more."

I often came to Richard and his wife, and I often met Mr. Woodcourt there. Richard still suspected my guardian, and refused to see him, and when I said this was so unreasonable, my guardian only said, "What shall we find reasonable in Jarndyce and Jarndyce? Unreason and injustice from beginning to end, if it ever has an end. How should poor Rick, always hovering near it, pluck reason out of it?"

It was some months after this when Mr. Woodcourt asked me to be his wife, and I had to tell him I was not free. But I had to tell him that I could never forget how proud and glad I was at having been beloved by him.

He took my hand and kissed it, and was like himself again.

All this time my guardian had never referred to his letter or my answer, so I said to him next morning I would be the mistress of Bleak House whenever he pleased.

"Next month?" my guardian said gaily.

"Next month, dear guardian."

At the end of the month my guardian went away to Yorkshire, and asked me to follow him. I was very much surprised, and when the journey was over my guardian explained that he had asked me to come down to see a house he had bought for Mr. Woodcourt, with whom he was always very pleased.

It was a beautiful summer morning when we went out to look at the house, and there over the porch was written, "Bleak House." He led me to a seat, and sitting down beside me, said:

"When I wrote you the letter to which you brought the answer"—my guardian smiled as he referred to it—"I had my own happiness too much in view; but I had yours, too. Hear me, my love, but do not speak. When Woodcourt came home, I saw that there was other happiness for you; I saw with whom you would be happier. Well, I have long been in Allan Woodcourt's confidence, although he was not, until yesterday, in mine. One more last word. When Allan Woodcourt spoke to you, my dear, he spoke with my knowledge and consent. But I gave him no encouragement; not I, for these surprises were my great reward, and I was too miserly to part with a scrap of it. He was to come and tell me all that passed, and he did. I have no more to say. This is Bleak House. This day I give this house its little mistress, and before God it is the brightest day in all my life."

He rose, and raised me with him. We were no longer alone. My husband—I have called him by that name full seven happy years now—stood at my side.

"Allan," said my guardian, "take from me the best wife that ever man had. What more can I say for you than that I know you deserve her?"

He kissed me once again. And now the tears were in his eyes as he said, more softly, "Esther, my dearest, after so many years, there is a kind of parting in this too. I know that my mistake has caused you some distress.

Forgive your old guardian in restoring him to his old place in your affections. Allan, take my dear."

We all three went home together next day. We had an intimation from Mr. Kenge that the case would come on at Westminster in two days, and that a certain will had been found which might end the suit in Richard's favour.

Allan took me down to Westminster, and when we came to Westminster Hall we found that the Court of Chancery was full, and that something unusual had occurred. We asked a gentleman by us if he knew what case was on. He told us Jarndyce and Jarndyce, and that, as well as he could make out, it was over. Over for the day? "No," he said; "over for good."

In a few minutes a crowd came streaming out, and we saw Mr. Kenge. He told us that Jarndyce and Jarndyce was a monument of Chancery practice, and—in a good many words—that the case was over because the whole estate was found to have been absorbed in costs.

We hurried away, first to my guardian, and then to Ada and Richard.

Richard was lying on the sofa with his eyes closed when I went in. When he opened them, I fully saw, for the first time, how worn he was. But he spoke cheerfully, and said how glad he was to think of our intended marriage.

In the evening my guardian came in and laid his hand softly on Richard's.

"Oh, sir," said Richard, "you are a good man, a good man!" and burst into tears.

My guardian sat down beside him, keeping his hand on Richard's.

"My dear Rick," he said, "the clouds have cleared away, and it is bright now. We can see now. And how are you, my dear boy?"

"I am very weak, sir, but I hope I shall be stronger. I have to begin the world."

He sought to raise himself a little.

"Ada, my darling!" Allan raised him, so that she could hold him on her bosom. "I have done you many wrongs, my own. I have married you to poverty and trouble, I have scattered your means to the winds. You will forgive me all this, my Ada, before I begin the world?"

A smile lit up his face as she bent to kiss him. He slowly laid his face upon her bosom, drew his arms closer round her neck, and with one parting sob began the world. Not this—oh, not this! The world that sets this right.

David Copperfield

I.—My Early Childhood

I WAS born (as I have been informed and believe) on a Friday, at twelve o'clock at night, at Blunderstone, in Suffolk. I was a posthumous child. My father's eyes had been closed upon the light of this world six months when mine opened upon it. Miss Betsey Trotwood, an

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"David Copperfield"—published in 1849–50—will always be acclaimed by many as the best of all Dickens's books. It was its author's favourite, and its universal and lasting popularity is entirely deserved. "David Copperfield" is especially remarkable for the autobiographical element, not only in the wretched days of childhood at the wine merchant's, but in the shorthand-reporting in the House of Commons. Dickens never forgot his early degradation, as it seemed to him, in the blacking warehouse at Hungerford Stairs, or quite forgave those who sent him to an occupation he so loathed. Much of "David Copperfield" is familiar in our mouths as household words, and Swinburne has maintained that Micawber ranks with Dick Swiveller as one of the greatest characters in all Dickens's novels. "Copperfield" comes midway in the great list of works by Charles Dickens.

aunt of my father's, and consequently a great-aunt of mine, arrived on the afternoon of the day I was born, and explained to my mother (who was very much afraid of her) that she meant to provide for her child, which was to be a girl.

My aunt said never a word when she learnt that it was a boy, and not a girl, but took her bonnet by the strings in the manner of a sling, aimed a blow at the doctor's head with it, put it on bent, walked out, and never came back. She vanished like a discontented fairy.

The first objects that assume a distinct presence before me, as I look far back into the blank of my infancy, are my mother, with her pretty air and youthful shape, and Peggotty, my old nurse, with no shape at all, and with cheeks and arms so red and hard that I wondered the birds didn't peck her in preference to apples.

I remember a few years later, a gentleman with beautiful black hair and whiskers walking home from church on Sunday with us; and, somehow, I didn't like him or his deep voice, and I was jealous that his hand should touch my mother's in touching me—which it did.

It must have been about this time that, waking up from an uncomfortable doze one night, I found Peggotty and my mother both in tears, and both talking.

"Not such a one as this Mr. Copperfield wouldn't have liked," said Peggotty. "That I say, and that I swear!"

"Good heavens!" cried my mother. "You'll drive me mad! How can you have the heart to say such bitter things to me, when you are well aware that out of this place I haven't a single friend to turn to?" But the following Sunday I saw the gentleman with the black whiskers again, and he walked home from church with us, and gradually I became used to seeing him and knowing him as Mr. Murdstone. I liked him no better than at first, and had the same uneasy jealousy of him.

It was on my return from a visit to Yarmouth, where

I went with Peggotty to spend a fortnight at her brother's, that I found my mother married to Mr. Murdstone. They were sitting by the fire in the best parlour when I came in.

I gave him my hand. After a moment of suspense, I went and kissed my mother. I could not look at her, I could not look at him; I knew quite well he was looking at us both. As soon as I could creep away, I crept upstairs, and cried myself to sleep.

A word of encouragement, of pity for my childish ignorance, of welcome home, of reassurance to me that it *was* home, might have made me dutiful to him in my heart henceforth, instead of in my hypocritical outside, and might have made me respect instead of hating him.

Miss Murdstone arrived next day; she was dark, like her brother, and greatly resembled him in face and voice. Firmness was the grand quality on which both of them took their stand.

I soon fell into disgrace over my lessons. I never could do them with my mother satisfactorily with the Murdstones sitting by; their influence upon me was like the fascination of two snakes on a wretched young bird.

One dreadful morning, when the lessons had turned out even more badly than usual, Mr. Murdstone seized hold of me and twisted my head under his arm preparatory to beating me with a cane. At the first stroke I caught the hand with which he held me, in my mouth, between my teeth, and bit it through. He beat me then as if he would have beaten me to death. And when he had gone, I was kept a close prisoner in my room, and was not allowed to see my mother, and was only permitted to walk in the garden for half an hour every day. Miss Murdstone acted as gaoler, and after five days of this confinement, she told me I was to be sent away to school—to Salem House School, Blackheath.

I saw my mother before I left. They had persuaded

her I was a wicked fellow, and she was more sorry for that than for my going.

II.—I Begin Life on My own Account

I was doing my second term at school when I was told that my mother was dead, and that I was to go home to the funeral.

I never returned to Salem House. Mr. Murdstone and his sister left me to myself, and I could see that Mr. Murdstone liked me less than ever. At odd times I speculated on the possibility of not being taught any more or cared for any more, and growing up to be a shabby, moody man, lounging an idle life away about the village.

Peggotty was under notice to quit, and thought of going to live with her brother at Yarmouth; but as it turned out, she didn't do this, but married the old carrier Barkis instead.

"Young or old, Davy dear, as long as I am alive, and have this house over my head," said Peggotty to me on the day she was married, "you shall find it as if I expected you here directly. I shall keep it every day, as I used to keep your old little room, my darling."

The solitary condition I now fell into for some weeks was ended one day by Mr. Murdstone telling me that I was to be put into the business of Murdstone and Grinby.

"You will earn enough to provide for your eating and drinking, and pocket money," said Mr. Murdstone. "Your lodging, which I have arranged for, will be paid by me. So will your washing, and your clothes will be looked after for you, too. You are now going to London, David, to begin the world on your own account."

"In short, you are provided for," observed his sister, "and will please to do your duty."

So I became, at ten years old, a little labouring hind in the service of Murdstone and Grinby.

Murdstone and Grinby's warehouse was at the water-side, down in Blackfriars, and an important branch of their trade was the supply of wines and spirits to certain packet ships. A great many empty bottles were one of the consequences of this traffic, and a certain number of men and boys, of whom I was one, were employed to rinse and wash them. When the empty bottles ran short, there were labels to be pasted on full ones, or corks to be fitted to them, or finished bottles to be packed in casks.

There were three or four boys, counting me. Mick Walker was the name of the oldest; he wore a ragged apron, and a paper cap. The next boy was introduced to me under the extraordinary name of Mealy Potatoes, which had been bestowed upon him on account of his complexion, which was pale, or mealy.

No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship, and compared these associates with those of my happier childhood, with the boys at Salem House. Often in the early morning, when I was alone, I mingled my tears with the water in which I was washing the bottles, and sobbed as if there were a flaw in my breast, and it were in danger of bursting.

My salary was six or seven shillings a week—I think it was six at first, and seven afterwards—and I had to support myself on that money all the week. My breakfast was a penny loaf and a pennyworth of milk, and I kept another small loaf and a modicum of cheese to make my supper on at night.

I was so young and childish, and so little qualified to undertake the whole charge of my existence, that often of a morning I could not resist the stale pastry put out for sale at half price at the pastry-cooks' doors, and spent on that the money I should have kept for my dinner. On those days I either went without my dinner, or bought a roll or a slice of pudding.

I was such a child, and so little, that frequently when

I went into the bar of a strange public-house for a glass of ale or porter to moisten what I had for dinner, they were afraid to give it me.

I know I do not exaggerate the scantiness of my resources or the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling were given me at any time, I spent it in a dinner or a tea. I know that I worked from morning until night, a shabby child, and that I lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond.

Arrangements had been made by Mr. Murdstone for my lodging with Mr. Micawber—who took orders on commission for Murdstone and Grinby—and Mr. Micawber himself escorted me to his house in Windsor Terrace, City Road.

Mr. Micawber was a stoutish, middle-aged person, in a brown surtout, with no more hair upon his head than there is upon an egg, and with a very extensive face. His clothes were shabby, but he wore an imposing shirt-collar. He carried a jaunty sort of a stick, with a large pair of rusty tassels to it; and an eyeglass hung outside his coat—for ornament, I afterwards found, as he very seldom looked through it, and couldn't see anything when he did.

Arrived at his house in Windsor Terrace—which, I noticed, was shabby, like himself, but also, like himself, made all the show it could—he presented me to Mrs. Micawber, a thin and faded lady, not at all young.

"I never thought," said Mrs. Micawber, as she showed me my room at the top of the house at the back, "before I was married that I should ever find it necessary to take a lodger. But Mr. Micawber being in difficulties, all considerations of private feeling must give way."

I said, "Yes, ma'am."

"Mr. Micawber's difficulties are almost overwhelm-

ing just at present," said Mrs. Micawber, "and whether it is possible to bring him through them I don't know. If Mr. Micawber's creditors *will not* give him time, they must take the consequences."

In my forlorn state, I soon became quite attached to this family, and when Mr. Micawber's difficulties came to a crisis, and he was arrested and carried to the King's Bench Prison in the Borough, and Mrs. Micawber shortly afterwards followed him, I hired a little room in the neighbourhood of that institution.

Mr. Micawber was in due time released under the Insolvent Debtors' Act, and it was decided that he should go down to Plymouth, where Mrs. Micawber held that her family had influence.

My own mind was now made up. I had resolved to run away—to go by some means or other down into the country, to the only relation I had in the world, and tell my story to my aunt, Miss Betsey. I knew from Peggotty that Miss Betsey lived near Dover, but whether at Dover itself, at Hythe, Sandgate, or Folkstone, she could not say. One of our men, however, informing me on my asking him about these places that they were all close together, I deemed this enough for my object; and after seeing the Micawbers off at the coach office, I set off.

III.—My Aunt Provides for Me

It was on the sixth day of my flight that I reached the wide downs near Dover and set foot in the town.

I had walked every step of the way, sleeping under haystacks at night. Fortunately, it was summer weather, for I was obliged to part with coat and waistcoat to buy food. My shoes were in a woeful condition, and my hat—which had served me for a nightcap, too—was so crushed and bent that no old battered saucepan on the dunghill need have been ashamed to vie with it. My shirt and trousers, stained with heat, dew, grass, and the

Kentish soil on which I had slept, might have frightened the birds from my aunt's garden as I stood at the gate. My hair had known no comb or brush since I left London. In this plight I waited to introduce myself to my formidable aunt.

As I stood there, a lady came out of the house, with a handkerchief over her cap, a pair of gardening gloves on her hands and carrying a great knife. I was sure she must be Miss Betsey from her walk, for my mother had often described the way my aunt came to the house when I was born.

"Go away!" said Miss Betsey, shaking her head. "Go along! No boys here!"

I watched her as she marched to a corner of the garden, and then, in desperation, I went softly and stood beside her.

"If you please, ma'am—if you please, aunt, I am your nephew."

"Oh, Lord!" said my aunt, and sat flat down in the garden path.

"I am David Copperfield, of Blunderstone, in Suffolk, where you came when I was born. I have been very unhappy since my mother died. I have been taught nothing and put to work not fit for me. It made me run away to you, and I have walked all the way, and have never slept in bed since I began the journey."

Here my self-support gave way all at once, and I broke into a passion of crying.

Thereupon, my aunt got up in a great hurry, collared me, and took me into the parlour.

The first thing my aunt did was to pour the contents of several bottles down my throat. I think they must have been taken out at random, for I am sure I tasted aniseed water, anchovy sauce, and salad dressing. Then she put me on the sofa, and, acting on the advice of a pleasant-looking, grey-headed gentleman, whom she called "Mr. Dick," heated a bath for me. After that I

was enrobed in a shirt and trousers belonging to Mr. Dick, tied up in two or three great shawls, and fell asleep.

That was the beginning of my aunt's adoption of me. She wrote to Mr. Murdstone, and he and his sister arrived a few days later, and were routed by my aunt.

Mr. Murdstone said, finally, he would only take me back unconditionally, and that if I did not return there and then his doors would be shut against me henceforth.

"And what does the boy say?" said my aunt. "Are you ready to go, David?"

I answered "No," and entreated her not to let me go. I begged and prayed my aunt to befriend and protect me, for my father's sake.

"Mr. Dick," said my aunt, "what shall I do with this child?"

Mr. Dick considered, hesitated, brightened, and rejoined, "Have him measured for a suit of clothes directly!"

"Mr. Dick," said my aunt, "give me your hand, for your commonsense is invaluable." She pulled me towards her, and said to Mr. Murdstone, "You can go when you like; I'll take my chance with the boy!"

When they had gone my aunt announced that Mr. Dick would be joint guardian of me, with herself, and that I should be called Trotwood Copperfield.

Thus I began my new life, in a new name, and with everything new about me.

My aunt sent me to school at Canterbury, and, there being no room at the school for boarders, settled that I should board with her old lawyer, Mr. Wickfield.

My aunt was as happy as I was in this arrangement. For Mr. Wickfield's house was quiet and still; and Mr. Wickfield's little housekeeper was his only daughter, Agnes, a child of about my own age, whose face, so bright and happy, was the child likeness of a woman's portrait that was on the staircase. There was a tran-

quility about the house, and about Agnes, a good, calm spirit, that I have never forgotten and never shall.

The school I now went to was better in every way than Salem House. It seemed to me so long, however, since I had been among any companions of my own age, except Mick Walker and Mealy Potatoes, that I felt very strange at first. Whatever I had learnt had so slipped away from me that when I was examined about what I knew, I knew nothing, and was put in the lowest form of the school.

But I got a little the better of my uneasiness when I went to school the next day, and a good deal the better the day after, and so shook it off, by degrees, that in less than a fortnight I was quite at home, and happy among my new companions.

"Trot," said my aunt, when she left me at Mr. Wickfield's, "be a credit to yourself, to me, and Mr. Dick, and Heaven be with you! Never be mean in anything; never be false; never be cruel. Avoid these vices, Trot, and I can always be hopeful of you. And now the pony's at the door, and I am off!"

She embraced me hastily, and went out of the house, shutting the door after her. When I looked into the street I noticed how dejectedly she got into the chaise, and that she drove away without looking up.

IV.—Uriah Heep and Mr. Micawber

I first saw Uriah Heep on the day my aunt introduced me to Mr. Wickfield's house. He was then a red-haired youth of fifteen, but looking much older, whose hair was cropped as close as the closest stubble; who had hardly any eyebrows and no eyelashes, and eyes of a red-brown. He was high-shouldered and bony; dressed in decent black, with a white wisp of a neck-cloth; buttoned up to the throat; and had a long, lank, skeleton hand.

Heep was Mr. Wickfield's clerk, and I often saw him

of an evening in the little round office reading, and from time to time strayed in to talk to him.

He told me, one night, he was not doing office work, but was improving his legal knowledge.

"I suppose you are quite a great lawyer?" I said, after looking at him for some time.

"Me, Master Copperfield?" said Uriah. "Oh, no! I'm a very 'umble person. I am well aware that I am the 'umblest person going, let the other be where he may. My mother is likewise a very 'umble person. We live in a 'umble abode, Master Copperfield, but have much to be thankful for. My father's former calling was 'umble; he was a sexton."

"What is he now?" I asked.

"He is a partaker of glory at present, Master Copperfield," said Uriah Heep. "But we have much to be thankful for. How much have I to be thankful for in living with Mr. Wickfield!"

I asked Uriah if he had been with Mr. Wickfield long.

"I have been with him going on four years, Master Copperfield," said Uriah, "since a year after my father's death. How much I have to be thankful for in that! How much have I to be thankful for in Mr. Wickfield's kind intention to give me my articles, which would otherwise not lay within the 'umble means of mother and self!"

"Perhaps, when you're a regular lawyer, you'll be a partner in Mr. Wickfield's business, one of these days," I said to make myself agreeable; "and it will be Wickfield and Heep or Heep late Wickfield."

"Oh, no, Master Copperfield," returned Uriah, shaking his head, "I am much too 'umble for that!"

It must have been five or six years later, when I was in London, that Uriah recalled my prophecy to me.

Agnes had noticed as I had noticed, long before this, a gradual alteration in Mr. Wickfield. He sat longer

and longer over his wine, and it was at such times, when his hands trembled, and his speech was not plain, that Uriah was most certain to want him on some business.

So it came about that Agnes had to tell me that Uriah had made himself indispensable to her father.

"He is subtle and watchful," she said. "He has mastered papa's weaknesses, fostered them, and taken advantage of them, until papa is afraid of him."

If I was indignant to hear that Uriah had wormed himself into such promotion, I restrained my feelings when we met, for Agnes had bidden me not to repel him, for her father's sake, and for her own.

"What a prophet you have shown yourself, Master Copperfield!" said Uriah, reminding me of my early words. "You may not recollect it; but when a person is 'umble, a person treasures such things up. But the 'umblest persons, Master Copperfield, may be instruments of good. I am glad to think I have been the instrument of good to Mr. Wickfield, and that I may be more so. Oh, what a worthy man he is; but how imprudent he has been!"

When the rascal went on to tell me confidentially that he "loved the ground his Agnes walked on," and that he thought she might come to be kind to him, knowing his usefulness to her father, I had a delirious idea of seizing the red-hot poker out of the fire and running him through with it. However, I thought of Agnes, and could say nothing. In the end all the evil machinations of Uriah Heep were frustrated by my old friend Mr. Micawber, who, visiting Canterbury on the chance of something suitable turning up, and meeting me in Heep's company, was subsequently engaged by Heep as a clerk at twenty-two and sixpence per week.

It was only after Micawber had found that Uriah Heep had forged Mr. Wickfield's name to various documents, and had fraudulently speculated with moneys entrusted by my aunt, amongst others, to his partner,

that he turned upon him and denounced him, and accomplished what he called "the final pulverisation of Heep."

Mr. Micawber being once more "in pecuniary shackles," my aunt, so grateful, as we all were, for the services he had rendered, suggested emigration to Australia to him; he at once responded to the idea.

"The climate, I believe, is healthy," said Mrs. Micawber. "Then the question arises: Now, *are* the circumstances of the country such that a man of Mr. Micawber's abilities would have a fair chance of rising?—I will not say, at present, to be governor or anything of that sort; but would there be a reasonable opening for his talents to develop themselves? If so, it is evident to me that Australia is the legitimate sphere of action for Mr. Micawber."

"I entertain the conviction," said Mr. Micawber, "that it is, under existing circumstances, the land, the only land, for myself and family; and that something of an extraordinary nature will turn up on that shore."

But the defeat of Heep and Micawber's departure belong to the days of my manhood. Let me look back at intervening years.

V.—I Achieve Manhood

My school-days! The silent gliding on of my existence—the unseen, unfelt progress of my life—from childhood up to youth!

Time has stolen on unobserved, and *I* am the head boy now in the school, and look down on the line of boys below me with a condescending interest in such of them as bring to my mind the boy I was myself when I first came here. That little fellow seems to be no part of me; I remember him as something left behind upon the road of life, and almost think of him as of someone else.

And the little girl I saw on that first day at Mr.

Wickfield's, where is she? Gone also. In her stead, the perfect likeness of the picture, a child likeness no more, moves about the house; and Agnes—my sweet sister, as I call her in my thoughts, my counsellor and friend—the better angel of the lives of all who come within her calm, good, self-denying influence—is quite a woman.

It is time for me to have a profession, and my aunt proposes that I should be a proctor in Doctors' Commons. I learn that the proctors are a sort of solicitors, and that the Doctors' Commons is a faded court held near St. Paul's Churchyard, where people's marriages and wills are disposed of and disputes about ships and boats are settled.

So I am articled, and later, when my aunt has lost her money, through no fault of her own, but through the rascality of Uriah Heep, and I seek Mr. Spenlow to know if it is possible for my articles to be cancelled, it is, I am assured, Mr. Jorkins who is inexorable.

"If it had been my lot to have my hands unfettered, if I had not a partner—Mr. Jorkins," says Mr. Spenlow. "But I know my partner, Copperfield. Mr. Jorkins is *not* a man to respond to a proposition of this peculiar nature. Mr. Jorkins is very difficult to move from the beaten track."

The years pass.

I have come legally to man's estate. I have attained the dignity of twenty-one. Let me think what I have achieved.

Determined to do something to bring in money, I have mastered the savage mystery of shorthand, and make a respectable income by reporting the debates in Parliament for a morning newspaper. Night after night I record predictions that never come to pass, professions that are never fulfilled, explanations that are only meant to mystify.

I have come out in another way. I have taken, with fear and trembling, to authorship. I wrote a little some-

thing in secret, and sent it to a magazine, and it was published. Since then I have taken heart to write a good many trifling pieces.

My record is nearly finished.

Peggotty, a widow, is with my aunt, and Mr. Dick is in the room.

"Goodness me!" said my aunt, "who's this you're bringing home?"

"Agnes," said I.

We were to be married within a fortnight. It was not till I had told Agnes of my love that I learnt from her, as she laid her gentle hands upon my shoulders and looked calmly in my face, that she had loved me all my life.

Let me look back once more, for the last time, before I close these leaves.

I have advanced in fame and fortune. I have been married ten years, and I see my children playing in the room.

Here is my aunt, in stronger spectacles, an old woman of fourscore years and more, but upright yet, and godmother to a real, living Betsey Trotwood. Always with her, here comes Peggotty, my good old nurse, likewise in spectacles. A newspaper from Australia tells me that Mr. Micawber is now a magistrate and a rising townsman at Port Middlebay.

One face is above all these and beyond them all. I turn my head and see it, in its beautiful serenity, beside me. So may thy face be by me, Agnes, when I close my life; and when realities are melting from me, may I still find thee near me, pointing upward!

Dombey and Son

I.—Dombey and Son

DOMBEY sat in the corner of the darkened room in the great armchair by the bedside, and Son lay tucked up warm in a little basket-bedstead.

Dombey was about eight-and-forty years of age; Son about eight-and-forty minutes. Dombey was rather bald, rather red, and though a handsome, well-made man, too stern and pompous in appearance to be prepossessing. Son was very bald, and very red, and somewhat crushed and spotted in his general effect, as yet.

"The house will once again, Mrs. Dombey," said Mr. Dombey, "be not only in name, but in fact, Dombey and Son; Dombey and Son! He will be christened Paul, Mrs. Dombey, of course!"

The sick lady feebly echoed, "Of course," and closed her eyes again.

"His father's name, Mrs. Dombey, and his grandfather's! I wish his grandfather were alive this day."

The publication of "Dombey and Son" began in October, 1846, and the story was completed in twenty monthly parts at one shilling each, the last number being issued in April, 1848. Its success was striking and immediate, the sale of its first number exceeding that of "Martin Chuzzlewit" by more than 12,000 copies—a remarkable thing considering the immense superiority of "Chuzzlewit." "Dombey and Son," indeed, is by no means one of Dickens's best books; though little Paul will always retain the sympathies of the reader, and the story of his short life forever move us with its pathos. The popularity of "Dombey and Son" provoked an impudent publication called "Dombey and Daughter," which was started in January, 1847, and was issued monthly at a penny. Two stage versions of "Dombey" appeared—in London in 1873, and in New York in 1888, but in neither case was the adaptation particularly successful. "What are the wild waves saying?" was made the subject of a song—a duet—which at one time was widely sung, but is now, happily, forgotten.

And again he said "Dombey and Son" in exactly the same tone as before, and then went downstairs to learn what that fashionable physician, Dr. Parker Peps, had to say, for Mrs. Dombey lay very weak and still.

"Dombey and Son"—those three words conveyed the idea of Mr. Dombey's life. The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light.

He had risen, as his father had before him, in the course of life and death, from Son to Dombey, and for nearly twenty years had been the sole representative of the firm. Of those years he had been married ten—married, as some said, to a lady with no heart to give him. But such idle talk never reached the ears of Mr. Dombey. Dombey and Son often dealt in hides, never in hearts. Mr. Dombey would have reasoned that a matrimonial alliance with himself *must,* in the nature of things, be gratifying and honourable to any woman of commonsense.

One drawback only could be admitted. Until the present day there had been no issue—to speak of. There had been a girl some six years before, a child who now crouched by her mother's bed, unobserved. But what was that girl to Dombey and Son?

"Nature must be called upon to make a vigorous effort in this instance!" said Doctor Parker Peps, referring to Mrs. Dombey.

Mrs. Chick, Mr. Dombey's married sister, emphasised this opinion.

"Now my dear Paul," said Mrs. Chick, "you may rest assured that there is nothing wanting but an effort on Fanny's part."

They returned to the sick-room and its stillness. In vain Mrs. Chick exhorted her sister-in-law to make an effort; no sound came in answer but the loud ticking of Mr. Dombey's watch and Dr. Parker Pep's watch, which seemed in the silence to be running a race.

"Fanny!" said Mrs. Chick, "Only look at me. Only open your eyes to show me that you hear and understand me."

Still no answer. Mrs. Dombey lay motionless, clasping her little daughter to her breast.

"Mamma!" cried the child, sobbing aloud. "Oh, dear mamma!"

Thus clinging fast to that slight spar within her arms, the mother drifted out upon the dark and unknown sea that rolls round all the world.

Mr. Dombey, in the days to come, could not forget that closing scene—that he had had no part in it; that he had stood a mere spectator while those two figures lay clasped in each other's arms. His previous feelings of indifference towards his little daughter Florence changed into an uneasiness of an extraordinary kind. He had never conceived an aversion to her; it had not been worth his while or in his humour. But now he was ill at ease about her. He read nothing in her glance, when he saw her later in the solemn house, of the passionate desire to run clinging to him, and the dread of a repulse; the pitiable need in which she stood of some assurance and encouragement. He saw nothing of this.

II.—Mrs. Pipchin's

In spite of his early promise, all the vigilance and care bestowed upon him could not make little Paul a thriving boy. There was something wan and wistful in his look, and he had a strange, old-fashioned, thoughtful way of sitting brooding in his miniature arm-chair.

The medical practitioner recommended sea-air, and Mrs. Pipchin, who conducted an infantile boarding house of a very select description at Brighton, and whose scale of charges was high, was entrusted with the care of Paul's health when he was little more than five years old.

Mrs. Pipchin was a marvellous ill-favoured, ill-conditioned old lady, with a mottled face like bad marble, a hook nose, and a hard grey eye. It was generally said that Mrs. Pipchin was a woman of system with children, and no doubt she was. Certainly the wild ones went home tame enough, after sojourning for a few months beneath her hospitable roof.

At this exemplary old lady Paul would sit staring in his little arm-chair by the fire for any length of time. He was not fond of her, he was not afraid of her.

Once she asked him, when they were alone, what he was thinking about.

"You," said Paul, without the least reserve. "I'm thinking how old you must be."

"You mustn't say such things as that, young gentleman," returned the dame.

"Why not?" asked Paul.

"Because it's not polite!" said Mrs. Pipchin, snappishly.

"Not polite?" said Paul.

"No! And remember the story of the little boy that was gored to death by a mad bull for asking questions!"

"If the bull was mad," said Paul, "how did *he* know that the boy had asked questions? Nobody can go and whisper secrets to a mad bull. I don't believe that story."

"You don't believe it, sir?"

"No," said Paul.

"Not if it should happen to have been a tame bull, you little infidel?" said Mrs. Pipchin.

As Paul had not considered the subject in that light, he allowed himself to be put down for the present.

Mr. Dombey came down to Brighton every Sunday, and Florence was her brother's constant companion.

At first, Paul got no stronger, and a little carriage was procured for him, in which he could lie at his ease and be wheeled down to the sea-side; there he would

sit or lie for hours together; never so distressed as by the company of children—Florence alone excepted, always.

"Go away, if you please," he would say to any child who came up to him. "Thank you, but I don't want you. I think you had better go and play, if you please."

His favourite spot was quite a lonely one, far away from most loungers; and, with Florence sitting by his side, and the wind blowing on his face, and the water near the wheels of his bed, he wanted nothing more.

"I want to know what it says," he said once, looking steadily in her face. "The sea, Floy, what is it that it keeps on saying?"

She told him that it was only the noise of the rolling waves.

"Yes, yes," he said. "But I know that they are always saying something. Always the same thing. What place is over there?" He rose up, looking eagerly at the horizon.

She told him that there was another country opposite, but he said he didn't mean that; he meant farther away —farther away!

Very often afterwards, in the midst of their talk, he would break off, to try to understand what it was that the waves were always saying, and would rise up on his couch to look at that invisible region far away.

At the end of twelve months at Mrs. Pipchin's, Paul had grown strong enough to dispense with his little carriage, though he still looked thin and delicate.

Mr. Dombey therefore decided to remove him, not from Brighton, but to Doctor Blimber's educational establishment. "I fear," said Mr. Dombey, addressing Mrs. Pipchin, "that my son in his studies is behind many children of his age. Now instead of being behind his peers, my son ought to be before them—far before them. There is an eminence ready for him to mount upon. The

education of my son must not be delayed. It must not be left imperfect.

Doctor Blimber only undertook the charge of ten young gentlemen, and his establishment was a great hot-house, in which there was a forcing apparatus incessantly at work.

Florence would remain at Mrs. Pipchin's, and for the first six months Paul would return there for the Sunday.

"Now, Paul," said Mr. Dombey exultingly, when they stood on the doctor's doorsteps, "This is the way, indeed, to be Dombey and Son, and have money. You are almost a man already."

"Almost," returned the child.

III.—Doctor Blimber's Academy

The Doctor was a portly gentleman in a suit of black, with strings at his knees, and stockings below them. He had a bald head, highly polished, a deep voice, and a chin so very double that it was a wonder how he ever managed to shave into the creases.

Mrs. Blimber was not learned herself, but she pretended to be, and that did quite as well.

As to Miss Blimber, there was no light nonsense about her. She was dry and sandy with working in the graves of dead languages.

Mr. Feeder, B.A., Dr. Blimber's assistant, was a kind of human barrel-organ, with a list of tunes at which he was continually working, over and over again, without any variation.

Under the forcing system at Dr. Blimber's a young gentleman usually took leave of his spirits in three weeks; he had all the cares of the world on his head in three months, and he conceived bitter sentiments against his parents or guardians in four.

The doctor was sitting in his study when Mr. Dombey and Paul arrived. "And how do you do, sir?" he said

to Mr Dombey. "And how is my little friend?" It seemed to Paul as if the great clock in the hall took this up, and went on saying, "how, is, my, lit-tle friend? how, is, my, lit-tle friend?" over and over again.

Paul was handed over to Miss Blimber at once to be "brought on."

"Cornelia," said the doctor. "Dombey will be your charge at first. Bring him on, Cornelia, bring him on."

It was hard work, for no sooner had Paul mastered subject A than he was immediately provided with subject B, from which we passed to C, and even D. Often he felt giddy and confused, and drowsy and dull.

But there were always the Saturdays when Florence came at noon to fetch him, and never would she, in any weather, stay away. Florence brought the school-books he was studying, and every Saturday night would patiently assist him through so much as they could anticipate together of his next week's work. And this saved him, possibly, from sinking underneath the burden which the fair Cornelia Blimber piled upon his back.

It was not that Miss Blimber meant to be too hard upon him, or that Dr. Blimber meant to bear too heavily on the young gentlemen in general. But when Dr. Blimber said that Paul made great progress, and was naturally clever, Mr. Dombey was more bent than ever on his being forced and crammed.

Such spirits as he had at the outset Paul soon lost, of course. But he retained all that was strange, and odd, and thoughtful in his character; and Mrs. Blimber thought him "odd," and whispered that he was "old fashioned," and that was all.

Between little Paul Dombey the youngest, and Mr. Toots, the oldest of Dr. Blimber's young gentlemen, a strong attachment existed. Toots had "gone through" so much, that he had left off growing, and was free to pursue his own course of study, which was chiefly

to write long letters to himself from persons of distinction, addressed "P. Toots, Esquire, Brighton," to preserve them in his desk with great care.

"How are you?" Toots would say to Paul, fifty times a day.

"Quite well, sir, thank you," Paul would answer.

"Shake hands," would be Toot's next advance. Which Paul, of course, would immediately do.

"I say!" cried Toots one evening, finding Paul looking out of the window. "I say, what do you think about?"

"Oh, I think about a great many things," replied Paul.

"Do you, though?" said Toots, appearing to consider that fact in itself surprising.

"If you had to die," said Paul, "don't you think you would rather die on a moonlight night, when the sky is quite clear, and the wind blowing, as it did last night?"

Mr. Toots, looking doubtfully at Paul, said he didn't know about that.

"It was a beautiful night," said Paul. "There was a boat over there, in the full light of the moon, a boat with a sail."

Mr. Toots, feeling called upon to say something, suggested "Smugglers," and then added, "or Preventive."

"A boat with a sail," repeated Paul. "It went away into the distance, and what do you think it seemed to do as it moved with the waves?"

"Pitch!" said Mr. Toots.

"It seemed to beckon," said the child; "to beckon me to come."

Certainly people found him an "old-fashioned" child. At the end of the term Dr. and Mrs. Blimber gave an early party to their pupils and their parents and guardians, and it was a day or two before this event when Paul was taken ill. This illness released him from his books, and made him think the more of Florence.

They all loved "Dombey's sister" at that party, and

Paul, sitting in a cushioned corner, heard her praises constantly. There was a half-intelligible sentiment, too, diffused around, referring to Florence and himself, and breathing sympathy for both, that soothed and touched him. He did not know why, but it seemed to have something to do with his "old-fashioned" reputation.

The time arrived for taking leave.

"Good-bye, Doctor Blimber," said Paul, stretching out his hand.

"Good-bye, my little friend," returned the doctor. "Dombey, Dombey, you have always been my favourite pupil."

"God bless you!" said Cornelia, taking both Paul's hands in hers. And it showed, Paul thought, how easily one might do injustice to a person; for Miss Blimber meant it—though she *was* a Forcer—and felt it.

There was a general move after Paul and Florence down the staircase, in which the whole Blimber family were included. Such a circumstance, Mr. Feeder said aloud, as has never happened in the case of any former young gentleman within his experience. The servants, with the butler—a stern man—at their head, had all an interest in seeing little Dombey go; while the young gentlemen pressed to shake hands with him, crying individually "Dombey, don't forget me!"

Once for a last look, Paul turned and gazed upon the faces addressed to him, and from that time whenever he thought of Dr. Blimber's it came back as he had seen it in this last view; and it never seemed to be a real place, but always a dream, full of faces.

IV.—Paul Goes Out with the Stream

From the night they brought him home from Dr. Blimber's Paul had never risen from his little bed. He lay there, listening to the noises in the street, quite tranquilly; not caring much how the time went, but watch-

ing it, and watching everywhere about him with observing eyes.

When the sunbeams struck into his room through the rustling blinds, and quivered on the opposite wall like golden water, he knew that evening was coming on.

By little and little he got tired of the bustle of the day, the noise of the carriages and carts, and people passing and repassing; and would fall asleep or be troubled with a restless and uneasy sense of a rushing river. "Why will it never stop, Floy?" he would sometimes ask her. "It is bearing me away, I think!"

But Floy could always soothe him.

He was visited by as many as three grave doctors, and the room was so quiet, and Paul was so observant of them, that he even knew the difference in the sound of their watches. But his interest centred in Sir Parker Peps; for Paul had heard them say long ago that that gentleman had been with his mamma when she clasped Florence in her arms and died. And he could not forget it now. He liked him for it. He was not afraid.

The people in the room were always changing, and in the night-time Paul began to wonder languidly who the figure was, with its head upon its hand, that returned so often and remained so long.

"Floy," he said, "what is that—there at the bottom of the bed?"

"There's nothing there except papa."

The figure lifted up its head and rose, and said, "My own boy! Don't you know me?"

Paul looked it in the face, and thought, was that his father? The next time he observed the figure at the bottom of the bed, he called to it.

"Don't be sorry for me, dear papa. Indeed, I am quite happy."

That was the beginning of his always saying in the morning that he was a great deal better, and that they were to tell his father so.

How many times the golden water danced upon the wall, how many nights the dark, dark river rolled towards the sea, Paul never counted, never sought to know.

One night he had been thinking of his mother, and her picture in the drawing-room downstairs.

"Floy, did I ever see mamma?"

"No, darling."

The river was running very fast now, and confusing his mind. Paul fell asleep, and when he awoke the sun was high.

"Floy, come close to me, and let me see you."

Sister and brother wound their arms around each other, and the golden light came streaming in, and fell upon them locked together.

"How fast the river runs between its green banks and the rushes, Floy! But it's very near the sea. I hear the waves. They always said so."

Presently he told her that the motion of the boat upon the stream was lulling him to rest, now the boat was out at sea but gliding smoothly on. And now there was a shore before him. Who stood on the bank?

He put his hands together, as he had been used to do at his prayers. He did not remove his arms to do it, but they saw him fold them so behind her neck.

"Mamma is like you, Floy. I know her by the face! The light about her head is shining on me as I go."

The golden ripple on the wall came back again, and nothing else stirred in the room. The old, old fashion! The fashion that came in with our first parents, and will last unchanged until our race has run its course, and the wide firmament is rolled up like a scroll. The old, old fashion—Death!

V.—The End of Dombey and Son

The stonemason to whom Mr. Dombey gave his order for a tablet in the church, in memory of little Paul, called

his attention to the inscription "Beloved and only child," and said, "It should be 'son,' I think, sir?"

"You are right, of course. Make the correction."

And there came a time when it was to Florence, and Florence only, that Mr. Dombey turned. For the great house of Dombey and Son fell, and in the crash its proud head became a ruined man, ruined beyond recovery.

Bankrupt in purse, his personal pride was yet further humbled. For Mr. Dombey had married again, a loveless match, and his wife deserted him. In the hour when he discovered that desertion he had driven his daughter Florence from the house.

He was fallen now never to be raised up any more. For the night of his worldly ruin there was no to-morrow's sun, for the stain of his domestic shame there was no purification.

In his pride—for he was proud yet—he let the world go from him freely. As it fell away, he shook it off. He knew, now, what it was to be rejected and deserted. Dombey and Son was no more—his children no more.

His daughter Florence had married—married a young sailor once a boy in the office of Dombey and Son—and thinking of her, Dombey, in the solitude of his dismantled home, remembered that she had never changed to him through all those years; and the mist through which he had seen her, cleared, and showed him her true self.

He wandered through the rooms, and thought of suicide; a guilty hand was grasping what was in his breast.

It was arrested by a cry—a wild, loud, loving, rapturous cry, and he saw his daughter.

"Papa! Dearest papa!"

Unchanged still. Of all the world unchanged.

He tottered to his chair. He felt her draw his arms about her neck. He felt her kisses on his face, he felt —oh, how deeply!—all that he had done.

She laid his face, now covered with his hands, against the heart that he had almost broken, and said, sobbing,

"Papa, love, I am a mother. Papa, dear, oh, say God bless me and my little child!"

His head, now grey, was encircled by her arm, and he groaned to think that never, never had it rested so before.

"My little child was born at sea, papa. I prayed to God to spare me that I might come. The moment I could land I came to you. Never let us be parted any more, papa!"

He kissed her on the lips, and lifting up his eyes, said, "Oh, my God, forgive me, for I need it very much!"

Great Expectations

I.—In the Marshes

My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, I called myself with my infant tongue Pip, and came to be called Pip.

My first most vivid impression of things seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon, one Christmas Eve. Ours was the marsh country, down the river, within twenty miles of the sea; and I had wandered into a bleak place overgrown with nettles called a churchyard.

"Great Expectations," first published as a serial in "All the Year Round," in 1861, is one of Dickens's finest works. It is rounded off so completely and the characters are so admirably drawn that, as a finished work of art, it is hard to say where the genius of its author has surpassed it. If there is less of the exuberance of "Pickwick," there is also less of the characteristic exaggeration of Dickens; and the pathos of the ex-convict's return is far deeper than the pathos of children's death-beds, so frequently exhibited by the author. "Great Expectations," for all its rare qualities, has never achieved the wide popularity of the novels of Charles Dickens that preceded it. We are not generally familiar with any name in the story, as we are with at least one name in all the other novels. Yet, Pip, as a study of child-life, youth, and early manhood, is as excellent as anything in the whole range of English fiction.

"Hold your noise," cried a terrible voice, as a man started up from among the graves at the side of the church porch. "Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!"

A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. A man who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and cut by stones; who limped and shivered, and glared and growled.

"Oh! don't cut my throat, sir," I pleaded in terror. "Pray don't do it, sir."

"Tell us your name! quick!"

"Pip, sir."

"Show us where you live," said the man. "P'int out the place. Who d'ye live with?"

I pointed to where our village was, and said, "With my sister, sir—Mrs. Joe Gargery—wife of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, sir."

"Blacksmith, eh?" said he, and looked down at his leg. Then he took me by the arms. "Now lookee here. You know what a file is?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you know what wittles is?"

"Yes, sir."

"You get me a file, and you get me wittles. You bring 'em both to me, or I'll have your heart and liver out. You bring the lot to me, to-morrow morning early, that file and them wittles you bring the lot to me at that old battery over yonder. You do it, and you never dare to say a word concerning your having seen me, and you shall be let to live. You fail, or you go from my words in any partickler, no matter how small it is, and your heart and your liver shall be tore out, roasted, and ate. Now what do you say?"

I said that I would get him the file, and I would get him what broken bits of food I could, and I would come to him at the Battery, early in the morning.

As soon as the darkness outside my little window

was shot with grey, I got up and went downstairs. I stole some bread, some rind of cheese, about half a jar of mincemeat (which I tied up in my pocket handkerchief), some brandy from a stone bottle (which I decanted into a glass bottle I had used for Spanish liquorice water up in my room), a meat bone with very little on it, and a beautiful round pork pie.

There was a door in the kitchen communicating with the forge; I unlocked and unbolted that door, got a file from among Joe's tools, put the fastenings as I had found them, and ran for the marshes.

It was a rainy morning, and very damp. I knew my way to the Battery, for I had been down there on a Sunday with Joe, and had just scrambled up the mound beyond the ditch when I saw the man sitting before me —with his back toward me.

I touched him on the shoulder, and he instantly jumped up, and it was not the same man, but another man—dressed in coarse grey, too, with a great iron on his leg.

He aimed a blow at me, and then ran into the mist, stumbling as he went, and I lost him.

I was soon at the Battery after that, and there was the right man waiting for me. He was awfully cold. And his eyes looked awfully hungry.

He devoured the food, mincemeat, meatbone, bread, cheese, and pork pie, all at once—more like a man who was putting it away somewhere in a violent hurry, than a man who was eating it, only stopping from time to time to listen.

"You're not a deceiving imp? You brought no one with you?"

"No, sir! No!"

"Well," said he, "I believe you. You'd be but a fierce young hound indeed if at your time of life you could help to hunt a wretched varmint, hunted as near death and dunghill as this poor wretched varmint is."

While he was eating I mentioned that I had just seen another man dressed like him, and with a badly bruised face.

"Not here?" he exclaimed, striking his left cheek.

"Yes, there!"

He swore he would pull him down like a bloodhound, and then crammed what little food was left into the breast of his grey jacket, and began to file at his iron like a madman; so I thought the best thing that I could do was to slip off home.

II.—I Meet Estella

I must have been about ten years old when I went to Miss Havisham's, and first met Estella.

My uncle Pumblechook, who kept a cornchandler's shop in the high-street of the town, took me to the large old, dismal house, which had all its windows barred. For miles round everybody had heard of Miss Havisham as an immensely rich and grim lady who led a life of seclusion; and everybody soon knew that Mr. Pumblechook had been commissioned to bring her a boy.

He left me at the courtyard, and a young lady, who was very pretty and seemed very proud, let me in, and I noticed that the passages were all dark, and that there was a candle burning. My guide, who called me "boy," but was really about my own age, was as scornful of me as if she had been one-and-twenty, and a queen. She led me to Miss Havisham's room, and there, in an armchair, with her elbow resting on the table, sat the strangest lady I have ever seen, or shall ever see.

She was dressed in rich materials—satins and lace and silks—all of white—or rather, which had been white, but, like all else in the room, were now faded yellow. Her shoes were white, and she had a long white veil dependent from her hair, and bridal flowers

in her hair; but her hair was white. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress.

"Who is it?" said the lady at the table.

"Pip, ma'am. Mr. Pumblechook's boy."

"Come nearer; let me look at you; come close. You are not afraid of a woman who has never seen the sun since you were born?"

"No, ma'am."

"Do you know what I touch here?" she said, laying her hands, one upon the other, on her left side.

"Yes, ma'am; your heart."

"Broken!" She was silent for a little while, and then added, "I am tired; I want diversion. Play, play, play!"

What was an unfortunate boy to do? I didn't know how to play.

"Call Estella," said the lady. "Call Estella, at the door."

It was a dreadful thing to be bawling "Estella" to a scornful young lady in a mysterious passage in an unknown house, but I had to do it. And Estella came, and I heard her say, in answer to Miss Havisham, "Play with this boy! Why, he is a common labouring boy!"

I thought I overheard Miss Havisham answer, "Well? You can break his heart."

We played at beggar my neighbour, and before the game was out Estella said disdainfully, "He calls the knaves Jacks, this boy! And what coarse hands he has! And what thick boots!"

I was very glad to get away. My coarse hands and my common boots had never troubled me before; but they troubled me now, and I determined to ask Joe why he had taught me to call those picture cards Jacks which ought to be called knaves.

For a long time I went once a week to this strange,

gloomy house—it was called Satis House—and once Estella told me I might kiss her.

And then Miss Havisham decided I was to be apprenticed to Joe, and gave him £25 for the purpose; and I left off going to see her, and helped Joe in the forge. But I didn't like Joe's trade, and I was afflicted by that most miserable thing—to feel ashamed of home.

I couldn't resist paying Miss Havisham a visit; and, not seeing Estella, stammered that I hoped she was well.

"Abroad," said Miss Havisham; "educating for a lady; far out of reach; prettier than ever; admired by all who see her. Do you feel that you have lost her?"

I was spared the trouble of answering by being dismissed, and went home dissatisfied and uncomfortable, thinking myself coarse and common, and wanting to be a gentleman.

It was in the fourth year of my apprenticeship when, one Saturday night, Joe and I were up at the Three Jolly Bargemen, according to our custom.

A stranger, who did not recognise me, but whom I recognised as a gentleman I had met on the stairs at Miss Havisham's, was in the room; and on his asking for a blacksmith named Gargery and his apprentice named Pip, and, being answered, said he wanted to have a private conference with us two.

Joe took him home, and the stranger told us his name was Jaggers, and that he was a lawyer in London.

"Now, Joseph Gargery, I am the bearer of an offer to relieve you of this young fellow, your apprentice. You would not object to cancel his indentures at his request and for his good?"

"No," said Joe.

"The communication I have got to make to this young fellow is that he has great expectations."

Joe and I gasped, and looked at one another.

"I am instructed to tell him," said Mr. Jaggers,

"that he will come into a handsome property. Further, it is the desire of the present possessor of that property that he be immediately removed from his present sphere of life and be brought up as a gentleman, and that he always bear the name of Pip. Now, you are to understand that the name of the person who is your liberal benefactor remains a profound secret until the person chooses to reveal it, and you are most positively prohibited from making any inquiry on this head. If you have a suspicion, keep it in your own breast."

Mr. Jaggers went on to say that if I accepted the expectations on these terms, there was already money in hand for my education and maintenance, and that one Mr. Matthew Pocket, in London (whom I knew to be a relation of Miss Havisham's), could be my tutor if I was willing to go to him, say in a week's time. Of course I accepted this wonderful good fortune, and had no doubt in my own mind that Miss Havisham was my benefactress.

When Mr. Jaggers asked Joe whether he desired any compensation, Joe laid his hand upon my shoulder with the touch of a woman. "Pip is that hearty welcome," said Joe, "to go free with his services, to honour and fortun', as no words can tell him. But if you think as money can make compensation to me for the loss of the little child—what come to the forge—and ever the best of friends!" He scooped his eyes with his disengaged hand, but said not another word.

III.—I Know My Benefactor

I went to London, and studied with Mr. Matthew Pocket, and shared rooms with his son Herbert (who, knowing my earlier life, decided to call me Handel), first in Barnard's Inn and later in the Temple.

On my twenty-first birthday I received £500, and this

(unknown to Herbert) I managed to make over to my friend in order to secure him a managership in a business house.

My studies were not directed in any professional channel, but were pursued with a view to my being equal to any emergency when my expectations, which I had been told to look forward to, were fulfilled.

Estella was often in London, and I met her at many houses, and was desperately in love with her. But though she treated me with friendship, she was proud and capricious as ever, and a few years later married a man whom I knew and detested—a Mr. Bentley Drummle, a bully and a scoundrel.

When I was three-and-twenty I happened to be alone one night in our chambers reading, for I had a taste for books. Herbert was away at Marseilles on a business journey.

The clocks had struck eleven, and I closed my books. I was still listening to the clocks, when I heard a footstep on the staircase, and started. The staircase lights were blown out by the wind, and I took my reading-lamp and went out to see who it was.

"There is someone there, is there not?" I called out. "What floor do you want?"

"The top—Mr. Pip."

"That is my name. There is nothing the matter?"

"Nothing the matter," returned the voice. And the man came on.

I made out that the man was roughly but substantially dressed; that he had iron-grey hair; that his age was about sixty; that he was a muscular man, hardened by exposure to weather. I saw nothing that in the least explained him, but I saw that he was holding out both his hands to me.

I could not recall a single feature, but I knew him. No need to take a file from his pocket and show it to me. I knew my convict, in spite of the intervening

years, as distinctly as I knew him in the churchyard when we first stood face to face.

He sat down on a chair that stood before the fire, and covered his forehead with his large brown hands.

"You acted nobly, my boy," said he.

I told him that I hoped he had mended his way of life, and was doing well.

"I've done wonderful well," he said. And then he asked me if I was doing well. And when I mentioned that I had been chosen to succeed to some property, he asked whose property? And, after that, if my lawyer-guardian's name began with "J."

All the truth of my position came flashing on me, and quickly I understood that Miss Havisham's intentions towards me were all a mere dream.

"Yes, Pip, dear boy, I've made a gentleman on you! It's me wot has done it! I swore that time, sure as ever I earned a guinea, that guinea should go to you. I swore afterwards, sure as ever I spec'lated and got rich, that you should get rich. Look 'ee here, Pip. I'm your second father. You're my son—more to me nor any son. I've put away money, only for you to spend. You ain't looked slowly forward to this as I have. You wasn't prepared for this as I wos. It warn't easy, Pip, for me to leave them parts, nor it wasn't safe. Look 'ee here, dear boy; caution is necessary."

"How do you mean?" I said. "Caution?"

"I was sent for life. It's death to come back. There's been overmuch coming back of late years, and I should of a certainty be hanged if took."

As Herbert was away, I put the man in the spare room, and gave out that he was my uncle.

He told me something of his story next day, and when Herbert came back and we had found a bed-room for our visitor in Essex Street, he told us all of it. His name was Magwitch—Abel Magwitch—he called himself Provis now—and he had been left by a travelling

tinker to grow up alone. "In jail and out of jail, in jail and out of jail—that's my life pretty much, down to such times as I got shipped off, arter Pip stood my friend." But there was a man who "set up fur a gentleman, named Compeyson," and this Compeyson's business was swindling, forging, and stolen banknote passing. Magwitch became his servant, and when both men were arrested, Compeyson turned round on the man whom he had employed, and got off with seven years to Magwitch's fourteen. Compeyson was the second convict of my childhood.

On consideration of the case, and after consultation with Mr. Jaggers, who corroborated the statement that a colonist named Abel Magwitch, of New South Wales, was my benefactor, and admitted that a Mr. Provis had written to him on behalf of Magwitch, concerning my address, we decided that the best thing to be done was to take a lodging for Mr. Provis on the riverside below the Pool, at Mill Pond Bank. It was out of the way, and in case of danger it would be easy to get away by a packet steamer.

The only danger was from Compeyson—for he had gone in terror of his life, and feared the vengeance of the man he had betrayed.

IV.—My Fortune

We were soon warned that Compeyson was aware of the return of his enemy, and that flight was necessary. Both Herbert and I noticed how quickly Provis had become softened, and on the night when we were to take him on board a Hamburg steamer he was very gentle.

We were out in mid-stream in a small rowing boat, moving quietly with the tide, when, just as the Hamburg steamer came in sight, a four-oared galley ran aboard of us, and the man who held the lines in it called

out, "You have a returned transport there. That's the man wrapped in the cloak. His name is Abel Magwitch—otherwise Provis. I call upon him to surrender, and you to assist.

At once there was great confusion. The steamer was right upon us, and I heard the order given to stop the paddles. In the same moment I saw the steersman of the galley lay his hand on the prisoner's shoulder, and the prisoner start up, lean across his captor, and pull the cloak from the neck of a shrinking man in the galley. Still in the same moment I saw that the face disclosed was the face of the other convict of long ago, and white terror was on it. Then I heard a cry, and a loud splash in the water, and for an instant I seemed to struggle with a thousand mill weirs; the instant past, I was taken on board the galley. Herbert was there, but our boat was gone, and the two convicts were gone. Presently we saw a man swimming, but not swimming easily, and knew him to be Magwitch. He was taken on board, and instantly menacled at the wrists and ankles.

It was not till we had pulled up, and had landed at the riverside, that I could get some comforts for Magwitch, who had received injury in the chest, and a deep cut in the head. He told me that he believed himself to have gone under the keel of the steamer, and to have been struck on the head in rising. The injury to his chest he thought he had received against the side of the galley. He added that Compeyson, in the moment of his laying his hand on his cloak to identify him, had staggered up, and back, and they had both gone overboard together, locked in each other's arms. He had disengaged himself under water, and swam away.

He was taken to the police-court next day, and committed for trial at the next session, which would come on in a month.

"Dear boy," he said. "Look 'ee, here. It's best as

a gentleman should not be knowed to belong to me now."

"I will never stir from your side," said I, "when I am suffered to be near you. Please God, I will be as true to you as you have been to me!"

When the sessions came round, the trial was very short and very clear, and the capital sentence was pronounced. But the prisoner was very ill. Two of his ribs had been broken, and one of his lungs seriously injured, and ten days before the date fixed for his execution death set him free.

"Dear boy," he said, as I sat down by his bed on that last day. "I thought you was late. But I knowed you couldn't be that. You've never deserted me, dear boy."

I pressed his hand in silence.

"And what's the best of all," he said, "you've been more comfortable along of me since I was under a dark cloud than when the sun shone. That's best of all."

He had spoken his last words, and, holding my hand in his, passed away.

And with his death ended my expectations, for the pocket-book containing his wealth went to the Crown.

Herbert took me into his business, and I became a clerk, and afterwards went abroad to take charge of the eastern branch, and when many a year had gone round, became a partner.

It was eleven years later when I was down in the marshes again. I had been to see Joe Gargery, who was as friendly as ever, and had strolled on to where Satis House once stood. I had been told of Miss Havisham's death, and also of the death of Estella's husband.

Nothing was left of the old house but the garden wall, and as I stood looking along the desolate garden walk a solitary figure came up. I saw it stop, and half turn away, and then let me come up to it. It faltered as if much surprised, and uttered my name, and I cried out, "Estella!"

I took her hand in mine, and we went out of the ruined place; and as the morning mists had risen long ago when I first left the forge, so the evening mists were rising now, and in all the broad expanse of tranquil light they showed to me I saw no shadow of another parting from her.

Hard Times

I.—Mr. Thomas Gradgrind

"THOMAS GRADGRIND, sir. A man of facts and calculations. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to."

In such terms Mr. Gradgrind always mentally introduced himself, whether to his private circle of acquaintance or to the public in general. In such terms Thomas Gradgrind presented himself to the schoolmaster and children before him. It was his school, and he intended it to be a model.

"Hard Times" is not one of the longest, but it is one of the most powerful of Dickens's works. John Ruskin went so far as to call it "in several respects the greatest" book Dickens had written. It is, of course, a fierce attack on the early Victorian school of political economists. The Bounderbys and Gradgrinds are typical of certain characters, and, though they change their form of speech, are still recognisable to-day. As a study of social and industrial life in England in the manufacturing districts fifty years ago, "Hard Times" will always be valuable, though allowance must be made here as elsewhere for the novelist's tendency to exaggeration—exaggeration of virtue no less than of vice or weakness. In Josiah Bounderby and Stephen Blackpool this characteristic is pronounced. The first, according to John Ruskin, being a dramatic monster, and the second a dramatic perfection. The story first appeared serially in "Household Words" between April 1 and August 12, 1854.

"Now, what I want is facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon facts. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to facts, sir."

Mr. Gradgrind, having waited to hear a model lesson delivered by the school master, walked home in a considerable state of satisfaction.

There were five young Gradgrinds, and they were models every one. They had been lectured at from their tenderest years; coursed, like little hares, almost as soon as they could run, they had been made to run to the lecture-room.

To his matter-of-fact home, which was called Stone Lodge, Mr. Gradgrind directed his steps. The house was situated on a moor, within a mile or two of a great town, called Coketown.

On the outskirts of this town a travelling circus ("Sleary's Horse-riding") had pitched its tent, and, to his amazement, Mr. Gradgrind observed his two eldest children trying to obtain a peep, at the back of the booth, of the hidden glories within.

Mr. Gradgrind laid his hand upon the shoulder of each erring child, and said, "Louisa! Thomas!"

"I wanted to see what it was like," said Louisa shortly. "I brought him, I was tired, father. I have been tired a long time."

"Tired? Of what?" asked the astonished father.

"I don't know of what—of everything, I think."

They walked on in silence for some half a mile before Mr. Gradgrind gravely broke out with, "What would your best friends say, Louisa? What would Mr. Bounderby say?"

All the way to Stone Lodge he repeated at intervals, "What would Mr. Bounderby say?"

At the first mention of the name his daughter, a child

of fifteen or sixteen now, but at no distant day to become a woman, all at once, stole a look at him, remarkable for its intense and searching character. He saw nothing of it, for before he looked at her, she had again cast down her eyes.

Mr. Bounderby was at Stone Lodge when they arrived. He stood before the fire on the hearth rug, delivering some observations to Mrs. Gradgrind on the circumstance of its being his birthday. It was a commanding position from which to subdue Mrs. Gradgrind.

He stopped in his harangue, which was entirely concerned with the story of his early disadvantages, at the entrance of his eminently practical friend and the two young culprits.

"Well!" blustered Mr. Bounderby, "what's the matter? What is young Thomas in the dumps about?"

He spoke of young Thomas, but he looked at Louisa.

"We were peeping at the circus," muttered Louisa haughtily; "and father caught us."

"And, Mrs. Gradgrind," said her husband, in a lofty manner, "I should as soon have expected to find my children reading poetry."

"Dear me!" whimpered Mrs. Gradgrind. "How can you, Louisa and Thomas? I wonder at you. I declare you're enough to make one regret ever having had a family at all. I have a great mind to say I wish I hadn't. *Then* what would you have done, I should like to know? As if, with my head in its present throbbing state, you couldn't go and look at the shells and minerals and things provided for you, instead of circuses. I'm sure you have enough to do if that's what you want. With my head in its present state I couldn't remember the mere names of half the facts you have got to attend to."

"That's the reason," pouted Louisa.

"Don't tell me that's the reason, because it can be nothing of the sort," said Mrs. Gradgrind. "Go and be something logical directly."

Mrs. Gradgrind, not being a scientific character, usually dismissed her children to their studies with the general injunction that they were to choose their own pursuit.

II.—Mr. Bounderby of Coketown

Mr. Josiah Bounderby was as near being Mr. Gradgrind's bosom friend as a man perfectly devoid of sentiment can be to another man perfectly devoid of sentiment.

He was a rich man—banker, merchant, manufacturer, and what not. A big, loud man, with a stare and a metallic laugh. A man who could never sufficiently vaunt himself—a self-made man. A man who was always proclaiming, through that brassy speaking-trumpet of a voice of his, his early ignorance and poverty. A man who was the bully of humility.

He was fond of telling, was Mr. Bounderby, how he was born in a ditch, and, abandoned by his mother, how he ran away from his grandmother, who starved and ill-used him, and so became a vagabond. "I pulled through it," he would say, "though nobody threw me out a rope. Vagabond, errand-boy, labourer, porter, clerk, chief manager, small partner—Josiah Bounderby, of Coketown."

This myth of his early life was dissipated later; and it turned out that his mother, a respectable old woman, whom Bounderby pensioned off with thirty pounds a year on condition she never came near him, had pinched herself to help him out in life, and put him as apprentice to a trade. From this apprenticeship he had steadily risen to riches.

Mr. Bounderby held strong views about the people who worked for him, the "hands" he called them; and found, whenever they complained of anything, that they always expected to be set up in a coach and six, and to be fed on turtle soup and venison, with a gold spoon.

As time went on, and young Thomas Gradgrind became old enough to go into Bounderby's Bank, Bounderby decided that Louisa was old enough to be married.

Mr. Gradgrind, now member of parliament for Coketown, mentioned the matter to his daughter.

"Louisa, my dear, you are the subject of a proposal of marriage that has been made to me."

He waited, as if he would have been glad that she said something. Strange to relate Mr. Gradgrind was not so collected at this moment as his daughter was.

"I have undertaken to let you know that—in short, that Mr. Bounderby has long hoped that the time might arrive when he should offer you his hand in marriage. That time has now come, and Mr. Bounderby has made his proposal to me, and has entreated me to make it known to you."

"Father," said Louisa, "do you think I love Mr. Bounderby?"

Mr. Gradgrind was extremely discomforted by this unexpected question. "Well, my child," he returned, "I—really—cannot take upon myself to say."

"Father," pursued Louisa, in exactly the same voice as before, "do you ask me to love Mr. Bounderby?"

"My dear Louisa, no. No, I ask nothing."

"Father, does Mr. Bounderby ask me to love him?"

"Really, my dear, it is difficult to answer your question. Because the reply depends so materially, Louisa, on the sense in which we use the expression. Mr. Bounderby does not pretend to anything sentimental. Now, I should advise you to consider this question simply as one of fact. Now, what are the facts of this case? You are, we will say in round numbers, twenty years of age. Mr. Bounderby is, we will say in round numbers, fifty. There is some disparity in your respective years, but in your means and position there is none; on the contrary, there is a great suitability. Confining yourself rigidly to fact,

the questions of fact are: 'Does Mr. Bounderby ask me to marry him?' 'Yes, he does.' And, 'Shall I marry him?'"

"Shall I marry him?" repeated Louisa, with great deliberation.

There was silence between the two before Louisa spoke again. She thought of the shortness of life, of how her brother Tom had said it would be a good thing for him if she made up her mind to do—she knew what.

"While it lasts," she said aloud, "I would like to do the little I can, and the little I am fit for. What does it matter? Mr. Bounderby asks me to marry him. Let it be so. Since Mr. Bounderby likes to take me thus, I am satisfied to accept his proposal. Tell him, father, as soon as you please, that this was my answer. Repeat it, word for word, if you can, because I should wish him to know what I said."

"It is quite right, my dear," retorted her father approvingly, "to be exact I will observe your very proper request. Have you any wish in reference to the period of your marriage, my child?"

"None, father. What does it matter?"

They went into the drawing-room, and Mr. Gradgrind presented Louisa to his wife as Mrs. Bounderby.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Gradgrind. "So you have settled it. I am sure I give you joy, my dear, and I hope you may turn all your ological studies to good account. And now, you see, I shall be worrying myself morning, noon, and night, to know what I am to call him!"

"Mrs. Gradgrind," said her husband solemnly, "what do you mean?"

"Whatever am I to call him when he is married to Louisa? I must call him something. It's impossible to be constantly addressing him, and never giving him a name. I cannot call him Josiah, for the name is insupportable to me. You yourself wouldn't hear of Joe, you very well know. Am I to call my own son-in-law 'Mis-

ter?' I believe not, unless the time has arrived when I am to be trampled upon by my relations. Then, what am I to call him?"

There being no answer to this conundrum, Mrs. Gradgrind retired to bed.

The day of the marriage came, and after the wedding-breakfast the bridegroom addressed the company—an improving party, there was no nonsense about any of them—in the following terms.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am Josiah Bounderby, of Coketown. Since you have done my wife and myself the honour of drinking our healths and happiness, I suppose I must acknowledge the same. If you want a speech, my friend and father-in-law, Tom Gradgrind, is a member of parliament, and you know where to get it. Now, you have mentioned that I am this day married to Tom Gradgrind's daughter. I am very glad to be so. It has long been my wish to be so. I have watched her bringing up, and I believe she is worthy of me. At the same time, I believe I am worthy of her. So I thank you for the goodwill you have shown towards us."

Shortly after which oration, as they were going on a nuptial trip to Lyons, in order that Mr. Bounderby might see how the hands got on in those parts, and whether they, too, required to be fed with gold spoons, the happy pair departed for the railroad. As the bride passed downstairs her brother Tom whispered to her. "What a game girl you are, to be such a first-rate sister, too!"

She clung to him as she would have clung to some far better nature that day, and was shaken in her composure for the first time.

III.—Mr. James Harthouse

The Gradgrind party wanting assistance in the House of Commons, Mr. James Harthouse, who was of good family and appearance, and had tried most things

and found them a bore, was sent down to Coketown to study the neighbourhood with a view to entering Parliament.

Mr. Bounderby at once pounced upon him, and James Harthouse was introduced to Mrs. Bounderby and her brother. Tom Gradgrind, junior, brought up under a continuous system of restraint, was a hypocrite, a thief, and, to Mr. James Harthouse, a whelp.

Yet the visitor saw at once that the whelp was the only creature Mrs. Bounderby cared for, and it occurred to him, as time went on, that to win Mrs. Bounderby's affection (for he made no secret of his contempt for politics), he must devote himself to the whelp.

Mr. Bounderby was proud to have Mr. James Harthouse under his roof, proud to show off his greatness and self-importance to this gentleman from London.

"You're a gentleman, and I don't pretend to be one. You're a man of family. I am a bit of dirty riff-raff, and a genuine scrap of rag, tag, and bobtail," said Mr. Bounderby.

At the same time Mr. Bounderby blustered at his wife and bullied his hands, so that Mr. Harthouse might understand his independence.

One of these hands, Stephen Blackpool, an old, steady, faithful workman, who had been boycotted by his fellows for refusing to join a trade union, was summoned to Mr. Bounderby's presence in order that Harthouse might see a specimen of the people that had to be dealt with.

Blackpool said he had nought to say about the trade union business; he had given a promise not to join, that was all.

"Not to me, you know!" said Bounderby.

"Oh, no sir; not to you!"

"Here's a gentleman from London present," Mr. Bounderby said, pointing at Harthouse. "A Parliament gentleman. Now, what do you complain of?"

"I ha' not come here, sir, to complain. I were sent for. Indeed, we are in a muddle, sir. Look round town —so rich as 'tis. Look how we live, and where we live, an' in what numbers; and look how the mills is always a-goin', and how they never works us no nigher to any distant object, 'cepting always, death. Sir, I cannot, wi' my little learning, tell the gentleman what will better this; though some working men o' this town could. But the strong hand will never do't; nor yet lettin' alone will never do't. Ratin' us as so much power and reg'latin' us as if we was figures in a sum, will never do't."

"Now, it's clear to me," said Mr. Bounderby, "that you are one of those chaps who have always got a grievance. And you are such a raspish, ill-conditioned chap that even your own union—the men who know you best —will have nothing to do with you. And I tell you what, I go so far along with them for a novelty, that I'll have nothing to do with you either. You can finish off what you're at, and then go elsewhere."

Thus James Harthouse learnt how Mr. Bounderby dealt with hands.

Mr. Harthouse, however, only felt bored, and took the earliest opportunity to explain to Mrs. Bounderby that he really had no opinions, and that he was going in for her father's opinions, because he might as well back them as anything else.

"The side that can prove anything in a line of units, tens, hundreds, and thousands, Mrs. Bounderby, seems to me to afford the most fun and to give a man the best chance. I am quite ready to go in for it to the same extent as if I believed it. And what more could I possibly do if I did believe it?"

"You are a singular politician," said Louisa.

"Pardon me; I have not even that merit. We are the largest party in the state, I assure you, if we all fell out of our adopted ranks and were reviewed together."

The more Mr. Harthouse's interest waned in politics the greater became his interest in Mrs. Bounderby. And he cultivated the whelp, cultivated him earnestly, and by so doing learnt from the graceless youth that "Loo never cared anything for old Bounderby," and had married him to please her brother.

Gradually, bit by bit, James Harthouse established a confidence with the whelp's sister from which her husband was excluded. He established a confidence with her that absolutely turned upon her indifference towards her husband, and the absence at all times of any congeniality between them. He had artfully, but plainly, assured her that he knew her heart in its last most delicate recesses, and the barrier behind which she lived had melted away.

And yet he had not, even now, any earnest wickedness of purpose in him. So drifting icebergs, setting with a current, wreck the ships.

IV.—Mr. Gradgrind and His Daughter

Mrs. Gradgrind died while her husband was up in London, and Louisa was with her mother when death came.

"You learnt a great deal, Louisa, and so did your brother," said Mrs. Gradgrind, when she was dying. "Ologies of all kinds from morning to night. But there is something—not an ology at all—that your father has missed, or forgotten. I don't know what it is; I shall never get its name now. But your father may. It makes me restless. I want to write to him to find out, for God's sake, what it is."

It was shortly after Mrs. Gradgrind's death that Mr. Bounderby was called away from home on business for a few days; and Mr. James Harthouse, still not sure at times of his purpose, found himself alone with Mrs. Bounderby.

They were in the garden, and Harthouse implored her to accept him as her lover. She urged him to go away, she commanded him to go away; but she neither turned her face to him nor raised it, but sat as still as though she were a statue.

Harthouse declared that she was the stake for which he ardently desired to play away all that he had in life; that the objects he had lately pursued turned worthless beside her; the success that was almost within his grasp he flung away from him, like the dirt it was, compared with her.

All this, and more, he said, and pleaded for a further meeting.

"Not here," Louisa said calmly.

They parted at the beginning of a heavy shower of rain, and the fall James Harthouse had ridden for was averted.

Mrs. Bounderby left her husband's house, left it for good; not to share Mr. Harthouse's life, but to return to her father.

Mr. Gradgrind, released from parliament for a time, was alone in his study, when his eldest daughter entered.

"What is the matter, Louisa?"

"Father, I want to speak to you. You have trained me from my cradle?"

"Yes, Louisa."

"I curse the hour in which I was born to sucn a destiny. How could you give me life, and take from me all the things that raise it from the state of conscious death? Now, hear what I have come to say. With a hunger and a thirst upon me, father, which have never been for a moment appeased, in a condition where it seemed nothing could be worth the pain and trouble of a contest, you proposed my husband to me."

"I never knew you were unhappy, my child!"

"I took him. I never made a pretence to him or you that I loved him. I knew, and, father, you knew, and he

knew, that I never did. I was not wholly indifferent, for I had a hope of being pleasant and useful to Tom. But Tom had been the subject of all the little tenderness of my life, perhaps he became so because I knew so well how to pity him. It matters little now, except as it may dispose you to think more leniently of his errors."

"What can I do, child? Ask me what you will."

"I am coming to it. Father, chance has thrown into my way a new acquaintance; a man such as I had had no experience of—light, polished, easy. I only wondered it should be worth his while, who cared for nothing else, to care so much for me. It matters little how he gained my confidence. Father, he did gain it. What you know of the story of my marriage he soon knew just as well."

Her father's face was ashy white.

"I have done no worse; I have not disgraced you. This night, my husband being away, he has been with me. This minute he expects me, for I could release myself of his presence by no other means. I do not know that I am sorry or ashamed. All that I know is, your philosophy and your teaching will not save me. Father, you have brought me to this. Save me by some other means?"

She fell insensible, and he saw the pride of his heart and the triumph of his system lying at his feet. And it came to Thomas Gradgrind that night and on the morrow when he sat beside his daughter's bed, that there was a wisdom of the heart no less than a wisdom of the head; and that in supposing the latter to be all sufficient, he had erred.

But no such change of mind took place in Mr. Bounderby. Finding his wife absent, he went at once to Stone Lodge, and blustered in his usual way.

Mr. Gradgrind tried to make him understand that the best thing to do was to leave things as they were for a time, and that Louisa, who had been so tried, should

stay on a visit to her father, and be treated with tenderness and consideration. It was all wasted on Blunderby.

"Now, I don't want to quarrel with you, Tom Gradgrind!" he retorted. "If your daughter, whom I made Loo Bounderby, and might have done better by leaving Loo Gradgrind, don't come home at noon to-morrow, I shall understand that she prefers to stay away, and you'll take charge of her in future. What I shall say to people in general of the incompatibility that led to my so laying down the law will be this: I am Josiah Bounderby, she's the daughter of Tom Gradgrind; and the two horses wouldn't pull together. I am pretty well known to be rather an uncommon man, and most people will undertsand that it must be a woman rather out of the common who would come up to my mark. I have got no more to say. Good-night!"

At five minutes past twelve next day, Mr. Bounderby directed his wife's property to be carefully packed up and sent to Tom Gradgrind's, and then resumed a bachelor's life.

Mr. James Harthouse, learning from Louisa's maid —a young woman greatly attached to her mistress—that his attentions were altogether undesirable, and that he would never see Mrs. Bounderby again, decided to throw up politics and leave Coketown at once. Which he did.

Into how much of futurity did Mr. Bounderby see as he sat alone? Had he any prescience of the day, five years to come, when Josiah Bounderby, of Coketown, was to die in a fit in the Coketown street? Could he foresee Mr. Gradgrind, a white-haired man, making his facts and figures subservient to Faith, Hope, and Charity, and no longer trying to grind that Heavenly trio in his dusty little mills? These things were to be.

Could Louisa, sitting alone in her father's house and gazing into the fire, foresee the childless years before her? Could she picture a lonely brother, flying from England after robbery, and dying in a strange land, con-

scious of his want of love and penitent? These things were to be. Herself again a wife—a mother—lovingly watchful of her children, ever careful that they should have a childhood of the mind no less than a childhood of the body, as knowing it to be an even more beautiful thing, and a possession any hoarded scrap of which is a blessing and happiness to the wisest? Such a thing was never to be.

Little Dorrit

I.—The Father of the Marshalsea

THIRTY years ago there stood, a few doors short of the church of Saint George, in the Borough of Southwark, on the left-hand side of the way going southward, the Marshalsea Prison. It had stood there many years before, and it remained there some years afterwards; but it is gone now, and the world is none the worse without it.

A debtor had been taken to the Marshalsea Prison, a very amiable and very helpless middle-aged gentleman who was perfectly clear—"like all the rest of them," the turnkey on the lock said—that he was going out again directly.

The affairs of this debtor, a shy, retiring man, with

"Little Dorrit" was written at a time when the author was busying himself not only with other literary work, but also with semi-private theatricals. John Forster, Charles Dickens's biographer and friend, even had some sort of fear at that time that Dickens was in danger of adopting the stage as a profession. Domestic troubles, culminating a year later in the separation from his wife, also explain the restlessness and general dissatisfaction which affected the great novelist in the years 1855–57, when this story appeared. Hence there is no surprise that "Little Dorrit" added but little to its author's reputation. It is a very long book, but it will never take a front-rank place. The story, however, on its appearance in monthly parts, the first of which was published in January 1856, and the completed work in 1857, was enormously successful, beating, in Dickens's own words, "'Bleak House' out of the field." Popular with the public, it has never won the critics.

a mild voice and irresolute hands, were perplexed by a parnership, of which he knew no more than that he had invested money in it.

"Out?" said the turnkey. "He'll never get out unless his creditors take him by the shoulders and shove him out!"

The next day the debtor's wife came to the Marshalsea, bringing with her a little boy of three, and a little girl of two.

"Two children," the turnkey observed to himself. "And you another, which makes three; and your wife another, which makes four."

Six months later a little girl was born to the debtor, and when this child was eight years old, her mother, who had long been languishing, died.

The debtor had long grown accustomed to the place. Crushed at first by his imprisonment, he had soon found a dull relief in it. His elder children played regularly about the yard. If he had been a man with strength of purpose, he might have broken the net that held him, or broken his heart; but being what he was, he slipped easily into this smooth descent, and never more took one step upward.

The shabby old debtor with the soft manners and the white hair became the Father of the Marshalsea. And he grew to be proud of the title. All newcomers were presented to him. He was punctilious in the exaction of this ceremony. They were welcome to the Marshalsea, he would tell them.

It became a not unusual circumstance for letters to be put under his door at night enclosing half-a-crown, two half-crowns, now and then, at long intervals, even half a sovereign, for the Father of the Marshalsea, "With the compliments of a collegian taking leave." He received the gifts as tributes to a public character.

Later he established the custom of attending collegians of a certain standing to the gate, and taking

leave of them there. The collegian under treatment would often wrap up something in a paper and give it to him, "For the Father of the Marshalsea."

II.—The Child of the Marshalsea

The youngest child of the Father of the Marshalsea, born within the jail, was a very, very little creature indeed when she gained the knowledge that while her own light steps were free to pass beyond the prison gate, her father's feet must never cross that line.

At thirteen she could read and keep accounts—that is, could put down in words and figures how much the bare necessaries they needed would cost, and how much less they had to buy them with. From the first she was inspired to be something which was not what the rest were, and to be that something for the sake of the rest. Recognised as useful, even indispensable, she took the place of eldest of the three in all but precedence; was the head of the fallen family, and bore, in her own heart, its anxieties and shames. She had been, by snatches of a few weeks at a time, to an evening school outside, and got her sister and brother sent to day schools by desultory starts, during three or four years. There was no instruction for any of them at home; but she knew well —no one better—that a man so broken as to be the Father of the Marshalsea could be no father to his own children.

To these scanty means of improvement she added others. Her sister Fanny, having a great desire to learn dancing, the Child of the Marshalsea persuaded a dancing-master, detained for a short time, to teach her. And Fanny became a dancer.

There was a ruined uncle in the family group, ruined by his brother, the Father of the Marshalsea, and knowing no more how than his ruiner did, on whom Fanny's protection devolved. Naturally a retired and simple

man, he had shown no particular sense of being ruined, further than that he left off washing when the shock was announced, and never took to that luxury any more. Having been a very indifferent musical amateur in his better days, when he fell with his brother he resorted for support to playing a clarionet in a small theatre orchestra. It was the theatre in which his niece became a dancer, and he accepted the task of serving as her escort and guardian.

To get her brother—christened Edward, but called Tip—out of the prison was a more difficult task. Every post she obtained for him he always gave up, returning with the announcement that he was tired of it, and had cut it.

One day he came back, and said he was in for good, that he had been taken for forty pounds odd. For the first time in all those years, she sank under her cares. It was so hard to make Tip understand that the Father of the Marshalsea must not know the truth about his son.

For, the Father of the Marshalsea, as he grew more dependent on the contributions of his changing family, made the greater stand by his forlorn gentility. So the pretence had to be kept up that neither of his daughters earned their bread.

The Child of the Marshalsea learned needlework of an insolvent milliner, and went out daily to work for a Mrs. Clennam.

This was the life and this the history of the Child of the Marshalsea at twenty-two. Worldly wise in hard and poor necessities, she was innocent in all things else. This was the life, and this the history of Little Dorrit, now going home upon a dull September evening, and observed at a distance by Arthur Clennam. Arthur Clennam had returned to his mother's house—a dark and gloomy place—from the Far East. He had noticed that Little Dorrit appeared at eight, and left at eight.

She let herself out to do needlework, he was told. What became of her between the two eights was a mystery.

It was not easy for Arthur Clennam to make out Little Dorrit's face; she plied her needle in such retired corners. But it seemed to be a pale, transparent face, quick in expression, though not beautiful in feature. A delicately bent head, a tiny form, a quick little pair of busy hands, and a shabby dress—shabby but very neat—were Little Dorrit as she sat at work.

Arthur Clennam watched Little Dorrit disappear within the outer gate of the Marshalsea, and presently stopped an old man to ask what place it was.

"This is the Marshalsea, sir."

"Can anyone go in here?"

"Anyone can go in," replied the old man, plainly implying, "but it is not everyone who can go out."

"Pardon me once more. I am not impertinently curious. But are you familiar with the place? Do you know the name of Dorrit here?"

"My name, sir," replied the old man, "is Dorrit."

Clennam explained that he had seen a young woman working at his mother's, spoken of as Little Dorrit, and had noticed her come in here, and that he was sincerely interested in her, and wanted to know something about her.

"I know very little of the world, sir," replied the old man, "it would not be worth while to mislead me. The young woman whom you saw go in is my brother's child. You say you have seen her at your mother's, and have felt an interest in her, and wish to know what she does here. Come and see."

Arthur Clennam followed his guide to the room of the Father of the Marshalsea.

"I found this gentleman," said the uncle—"Mr. Clennam, William, son of Amy's friend—at the outer gate, wishful, as he was going by, of paying his respects. This is my brother William, sir."

"Mr. Clennam," said William Dorrit, "you are welcome, sir; pray sit down. I have welcomed many visitors here."

The Father of the Marshalsea went on to mention that he had been gratified by the testimonials of his visitors—the "very acceptable testimonials."

When Clennam left he presented his testimonial, and the next morning found him there again. He went out with Little Dorrit alone; asked her if she had ever heard his mother's name before.

"No, sir."

"I am not asking from any reason that can cause you anxiety. You think that at no time of your father's life was my name of Clennam ever familiar to him?"

"No, sir. And, oh, I hope you will not misunderstand my father! Don't judge him, sir, as you would judge others outside the gates. He has been there so long."

They had walked some way before they returned. She was not working at Mrs. Clennam's that day.

The courtyard received them at last, and there he said good-bye to Little Dorrit. Little as she had always looked, she looked less than ever when he saw her going into the Marshalsea Lodge passage.

Aware that his mother might have once averted the ruin of the Dorrit family, Clennam returned more than once to the Marshalsea. No word of love crossed his lips; he told Little Dorrit to think of him as an old man, old enough to be her father, and he besought her only to let him know if at any time he could do her service. "I press for no confidence now. I only ask you to repose unhesitating trust in me," he said.

"Can I do less than that when you are so good?"

"Then you will trust me fully? Will have no secret unhappiness or anxiety concealed from me?"

"Almost none."

But if Arthur Clennam kept silent, Little Dorrit was

not without a lover. Years ago young John Chivery, the sentimental son of the turnkey, had eyed her with admiring wonder. There seemed to young John a fitness in the attachment. She, the Child of the Marshalsea; he, the lock-keeper. Every Sunday young John presented cigars to the Father of the Marshalsea—who was glad to get them—and one particular Sunday afternoon he mustered up courage to urge his suit.

Little Dorrit was out, walking on the Iron Bridge, when young John found her.

"Miss Amy," he stammered, "I have had for a long time—ages they seem to me—a heart-cherished wish to say something to you. May I say it? May I, Miss Amy? I but ask the question humbly—may I say it? I know very well your family is far above mine. It were vain to conceal it. I know very well that your high-souled brother, and likewise your spirited sister, spurn me from a height."

"If you please, John Chivery," Little Dorrit answered, in a quiet way, "since you are so considerate as to ask me whether you shall say any more—if you please, no."

"Never, Miss Amy?"

"No, if you please. Never."

"Oh, Lord!" gasped young John.

"When you think of us, John—I mean, my brother and sister and me—don't think of us as being any different from the rest; for whatever we once were we ceased to be long ago, and never can be any more. And, good-bye, John. And I hope you will have a good wife one day, and be a happy man. I am sure you will deserve to be happy, and you will be, John."

"Good-bye, Miss Amy. Good-bye!"

III.—The Marshalsea Becomes an Orphan

It turned out that Mr. Dorrit, being of the Dorrits of Dorsetshire, was heir-at-law to a great fortune. Inquiries and investigations confirmed it.

Arthur Clennam broke the news to Little Dorrit, and together they went to the Marshalsea. William Dorrit was sitting in his old grey gown and his old black cap in the sunlight by the window when they entered. "Father, Mr. Clennam has brought me such joyful and wonderful intelligence about you!"

Her agitation was great, and the old man put his hand suddenly to his heart, and looked at Clennam.

"Tell me, Mr. Dorrit, what surprise would be the most unlooked for and the most acceptable to you. Do not be afraid to imagine it, or to say what it would be."

He looked steadfastly at Clennam, and, so looking at him, seemed to change into a very old, haggard man. The sun was bright upon the wall beyond the window, and on the spikes at the top. He slowly stretched out the hand that had been upon his heart, and pointed at the wall.

"It is down," said Clennam. "Gone! And in its place are the means to possess and enjoy the utmost that they have so long shut out. Mr. Dorrit, there is not the smallest doubt that within a few days you will be free and highly prosperous."

They had to fetch wine for the old man, and when he had swallowed a little he leaned back in his chair and cried. But he quickly recovered, and announced that everybody concerned should be nobly rewarded.

"No one, my dear sir, shall say that he has an unsatisfied claim against me. Everybody shall be remembered. I will not go away from here in anybody's debt. I particularly wish to act munificently, Mr. Clennam."

Clennam's offer of money for present contingencies was at once accepted.

"I am obliged to you for the temporary accommodation, sir. Exceedingly temporary, but well timed—well timed. Be so kind, sir, as to add the amount to former advances."

He grew more composed presently, and then when he seemed to be falling asleep unexpectedly sat up and said, "Mr. Clennam, am I to understand, my dear sir, that I could pass through the lodge at this moment, and take a walk?"

"I think not, Mr. Dorrit," was the unwilling reply. "There are certain forms to be completed. It is but a few hours now."

"A few hours, sir!" he returned in a sudden passion. "You talk very easily of hours, sir! How long do you suppose, sir, that an hour is to a man who is choking for want of air?"

It was his last demonstration for that time, but in the interval before the day of his departure he was very imperious with the lawyers concerned in his release, and a good deal of business was transacted.

Mr. Arthur Clennam received a cheque for £24 9s. 8d. from the solicitors of Edward Dorrit, Esq.—once "Tip"—with a note that the favour of the advance now repaid had not been asked of him.

To the applications made by collegians within the so-soon-to-be-orphaned Marshalsea for small sums of money, Mr. Dorrit responded with the greatest liberality. He also invited the whole College to a comprehensive entertainment in the yard, and went about among the company on that occasion, and took notice of individuals, like a baron of the olden time, in a rare good humour.

And now the final hour arrived when he and his family were to leave the prison for ever. The carriage was reported ready in the outer courtyard. Mr. Dorrit and

his brother proceeded arm in arm, Edward Dorrit, Esq., and his sister Fanny followed, also arm in arm.

There was not a collegian within doors, nor a turnkey absent, as they crossed the yard. Mr. Dorrit—whose meat and drink had many a time been bought with money presented by some of those who stood to watch him go—yielding to the vast speculation how the poor creatures were to get on without him, was great, and sad, but not absorbed. He patted children on the head like Sir Roger de Coverley going to church, spoke to people in the background by their Christian names, and condescended to all present.

At last three honest cheers announced that he had passed the gate, and that the Marshalsea was an orphan.

Only when the family had got into their carriage, and not before, Miss Fanny exclaimed, "Good gracious! Where's Amy?"

Her father had thought she was with her sister. Her sister had thought she was somewhere or other. They had all trusted to find her, as they had always done, quietly in the right place at the right moment. This going away was, perhaps, the very first action of their joint lives that they had got through without her.

"Now I do say, Pa," cried Miss Fanny, flushed and indignant, "that this is disgraceful! Here is that child, Amy, in her ugly old shabby dress. Disgracing us at the last moment by being carried out in that dress after all. And by that Mr. Clennam too!"

Clennam appeared at the carriage-door, bearing the little insensible figure in his arms.

"She has been forgotten," he said. "I ran up to her room, and found the door open, and that she had fainted on the floor."

They received her in the carriage, and the attendant, getting between Clennam and the carriage-door, with a sharp "By your leave, sir!" bundled up the steps, and drove away.

IV.—Another Prisoner in the Marshalsea

The Dorrit family travelled abroad in handsome style, and in due time Miss Fanny married.

A sudden seizure carried off old Mr. Dorrit, and he died thinking himself back in the Marshalsea. His brother Frederick, stricken with grief, did not long survive him.

Arthur Clennam, who had gone into partnership with a friend named Doyce, unfortunately invested his money in the financial schemes of Mr. Merdle, the greatest swindler of the day, and when the crash came and Merdle committed suicide, Clennam with hundreds of other innocent persons was involved in the general ruin.

Doyce was working at the time in Germany, and it was some weeks before he could be found; in the meantime, Clennam, being insolvent, was taken to the Marshalsea.

Mr. Chivery was on the lock and young John was in the lodge when the Marshalsea was reached. The elder Mr. Chivery shook hands with him in a shamefaced kind of way, and said, "I don't call to mind, sir, as I was ever less glad to see you."

The prisoner followed young John up the old staircase into the old room. "I thought you'd like the room, and here it is for you," said young John.

Young John waited upon him; and it was young John who explained that he did this not on the ground of the prisoner's merits, but because of the merits of another, of one who loved the prisoner. Clennam tried to argue to himself the improbability of Little Dorrit loving him, but he wasn't altogether successful.

He fell ill, and it was Little Dorrit whose living presence first cheered him when he returned from the world of feverish dreams and shadows.

He did his best to dissuade her from coming. He

was a ruined man, and the time when Little Dorrit and the prison had anything in common had long gone by.

But still she came and often read to him. And one day she told him that all her money had gone as his had gone, lost in the Merdle whirlpool, and that her sister Fanny's was lost, too, in the same way.

"I have nothing in the world. I am as poor as when I lived here. When papa came over to England, just before his death, he confided everything he had to the same hands, and it is all swept away. Oh, my dearest and best, are you quite sure you will not share my fortune with me?"

Locked in his arms, held to his heart, she drew the slight hand round his neck, and clasped it in its fellow-hand.

Of course, wnen Doyce, who was a thoroughly good fellow, and successful to boot, found out his partner's plight, he came back and put things right, and the business was soon set going again.

And on the very day of his release, Arthur Clennam and Little Dorrit went into the neighbouring church of St. George, and were married, Doyce giving the bride away.

Little Dorrit and her husband walked out of the church alone when the signing of the register was done.

They paused for a moment on the steps of the portico, and then went down into the roaring streets, inseparable and blessed.

Martin Chuzzlewit

I.—Mr. Pecksniff's New Pupil

Mr. Pecksniff lived in a little Wiltshire village within an easy journey of Salisbury.

The brazen plate upon his door bore the inscription, "Pecksniff, Architect," to which Mr. Pecksniff, on his cards of business, added, "and Land Surveyor." Of his architectural doings nothing was clearly known, except that he had never designed or built anything.

Mr. Pecksniff's professional engagements, indeed, were almost, if not entirely, confined to the reception of pupils. His genius lay in ensnaring parents and guardians and pocketing premiums.

Mr. Pecksniff was a moral man. Perhaps there never was a more moral man than Mr. Pecksniff, especially in

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On its monthly publication, in 1843–44, "Martin Chuzzlewit" was, pecuniarily, the least successful of Dickens's serials, though popular as a book. It was his first novel after his American tour, and the storm of resentment that had hailed the appearance of "American Notes," in 1842, was intensified by his merciless satire of American characteristics and institutions in "Martin Chuzzlewit." Despite all adverse criticism, however, "Chuzzlewit" is worthy to rank with anything that ever came from the pen of the great Victorian novelist. It is a very long story, and a very full one; the canvas is crowded with a gallery of typical Dickensian people. Through Mrs. Gamp, Dickens dealt a death-blow to the drunken nurse of the period. The name Pecksniff has become synonymous with a certain type of hypocrite, and the adjective Pecksniffian is in common use wherever the English language is spoken. Charged with exaggeration regarding Mr. Pecksniff, Dickens wrote in the preface to "Martin Chuzzlewit," "All the Pecksniff family upon earth are quite agreed, I believe, that no such character ever existed. I will not offer any plea on his behalf to so powerful and genteel a body." Mrs. Gamp, though one of the humorous types that have, perhaps, contributed most largely to the fame of Dickens, does not appear in this epitome, the character being a minor one in the development of the story.

his conversation and correspondence. Some people likened him to a direction-post, which is always telling the way to a place, and never goes there; but these were his enemies.

Into Mr. Pecksniff's house came young Martin Chuzzlewit, a relation of the architect's. Tom Pinch, Mr. Pecksniff's assistant, had driven over to Salisbury for the new pupil, and had already discoursed to Martin on Mr. Pecksniff and his family (for Mr. Pecksniff had two daughters—Mercy, and Charity), in whose good qualities he had a profound and pathetic belief.

Festive preparations on a rather extensive scale were already completed for Martin's benefit on the night of his arrival. There were two bottles of currant wine, white and red; a dish of sandwiches, very long, and very slim; another of apples; another of captain's biscuits; a plate of oranges cut up small and gritty with powdered sugar; and a highly geological home-made cake. The magnitude of these preparations quite took away Tom Pinch's breath, for though the new pupils were usually let down softly, particularly in the wine department, still this was a banquet, a sort of lord mayor's feast in private life, a something to think of, and hold on by afterwards.

To this entertainment Mr. Pecksniff besought the company to do full justice.

"Martin," he said, addressing his daughters, "will seat himself between you two, my dears, and Mr. Pinch will come by me. This is a mingling that repays one for much disappointment and vexation. Let us be merry." Here he took a captain's biscuit. "It is a poor heart that never rejoices; and our hearts are not poor. No!"

The following morning Mr. Pecksniff announced that he must go to London. "On professional business, my dear Martin; strictly on professional business; and I promised my girls long ago that they should accompany me. We shall go forth to-night by the heavy coach—like the dove of old, my dear Martin—and it will be a

week before we again deposit our olive-branches in the passage. When I say olive branches," observed Mr. Pecksniff, in explanation, "I mean our unpretending luggage."

"And now let me see," said Mr. Pecksniff presently, "how can you best employ yourself, Martin, while I am absent. Suppose you were to give me your idea of a monument to a Lord Mayor of London, or a tomb for a sheriff, or your notion of a cow-house to be erected in a nobleman's park. A pump is a very chaste practice. I have found that a lamp-post is calculated to refine the mind and give it a classical tendency. An ornamental turnpike has a remarkable effect upon the imagination. What do you say to beginning with an ornamental turnpike?"

"Whatever Mr. Pecksniff pleased," said Martin doubtfully.

"Stay," said that gentleman. "Come! as you're ambitious, and are a very neat draughtsman, you shall try your hand on these proposals for a grammar-school. When your mind requires to be refreshed by change of occupation, Thomas Pinch will instruct you in the art of surveying the back-garden, or in ascertaining the dead level of the road between this house and the finger-post, or in any other practical and pleasing pursuit. There is a cart-load of loose bricks, and a score or two of old flower-pots in the back-yard. If you could pile them up, my dear Martin, into any form which would remind me on my return, say, of St. Peter's at Rome, or the Mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople, it would be at once improving to you and agreeable to my feelings."

The coach having rolled away, with the olive-branches in the boot and the family of doves inside, Martin Chuzzlewit and Tom Pinch were left together. Now, there was something in the very simplicity of Pinch that invited confidences, and young Martin could not refrain from telling his story.

"I must talk openly to somebody," he began, "I'll talk openly to you. You must know, then, that I have been bred up from childhood with great expectations, and have always been taught to believe that one day I should be very rich. Certain things, however, have led to my being disinherited."

"By your father?" inquired Tom.

"By my grandfather. I have had no parents these many years. Now, my grandfather has a great many good points, but he has two very great faults, which are the staple of his bad side. He has the most confirmed obstinacy of character, and he is most abominably selfish; I have heard that these are failings of our family, and I have to be very thankful that they haven't descended to me. Now I come to the cream of my story, and the occasion of my being here. I am in love, Pinch. I am in love with one of the most beautiful girls the sun ever shone upon. But she is wholly and entirely dependent upon the pleasure of my grandfather; and if he were to know that she favoured my passion, she would lose her home and everything she posesses in the world. My grandfather, although I had conducted myself from the first with the utmost circumspection, is full of jealousy and mistrust, and suspected me of loving her. He said nothing to her, but attacked me in private, and charged me with designing to corrupt the fidelity to himself—observe his selfishness—of a young creature who was his only disinterested and faithful companion. The upshot of it was that I was to renounce her or be renounced by him. Of course, I was not going to yield to him, and here I am!"

Mr. Pinch, after staring at the fire, said, "Pecksniff, of course, you knew before?"

"Only by name. My grandfather kept not only himself, but me, aloof from all his relations. But our separation took place in a town in the neighbouring county. I saw Pecksniff's advertisement in the paper when I was

at Salisbury, and answered it, having always had some natural taste in the matters to which it referred. I was doubly bent on coming to him if possible, on account of his being——"

"Such an excellent man," interposed Tom, rubbing his hands.

"Why, not so much on that account," returned Martin, "as because my grandfather has an inveterate dislike to him, and after the old man's arbitrary treatment of me, I had a natural desire to run as directly counter to all his opinions as I could."

II.—Mr. Pecksniff Discharges His Duty

Mr. Pecksniff and his daughters took up their lodging in London at Mrs. Todgers's Commercial Boarding House, and it was at that favoured abode that old Martin Chuzzlewit, whose grandson had just entered Mr. Pecksniff's house, sought him out.

"I very much regret," said old Martin, "that you and I held such a conversation as we did when we met awhile since. The intentions that I bear towards you now are of another kind. Deserted by all in whom I have ever trusted; hoodwinked and beset by all who should help and sustain me, I fly to you for refuge. I confide in you to be my ally; to attach yourself to me by ties of interest and expectations. I regret having been severed from you so long."

Mr. Pecksniff looked up to the ceiling, and clasped his hands in rapture.

"I fear you don't know what an old man's humours are," resumed old Martin. "You don't know what it is to be required to court his likings and dislikings; to do his bidding, be it what it may. You have a new inmate in your house. He must quit it."

"For—for yours?" asked Mr. Pecksniff.

"For any shelter he can find. He has deceived you."

"I hope not," said Mr. Pecksniff eagerly. "I trust not. I have been extremely well disposed towards that young man. Deceit—deceit, my dear Mr. Chuzzlewit, would be final. I should hold myself bound, on proof of deceit, to renounce him instantly."

"Of course, you know that he has made his matrimonial choice?"

"Surely not without his grandfather's consent and approbation, my dear sir?" cried Mr. Pecksniff. "Don't tell me that. For the honour of human nature say you're not about to tell me that!"

"I thought he had suppressed it."

The indignation felt by Mr. Pecksniff at this terrible disclosure was only to be equalled by the kindling anger of his daughters. What, had they taken to their hearth and home a secretely contracted serpent? Horrible!

Old Martin then went on to inquire when they would be returning home; and, after relieving Mr. Pecksniff's unexpressed anxiety by mentioning that Mary Graham, the young lady whom the old man had adopted, would receive nothing at his death, announced that they might expect to see him before long.

With a hasty farewell, the old man left the house, followed to the door by Mr. Pecksniff and his daughters. A few days later the Pecksniffs set out for home.

Tom Pinch and Martin were both out in the lane to meet the coach, but Mr. Pecksniff pointedly ignored Martin's presence, even when the house had been reached; and it was not till Martin sharply demanded an explanation that he addressed him.

"You have deceived me," said Mr. Pecksniff. "You have imposed upon a nature which you knew to be confiding and unsuspicious. This lowly roof, sir, must not be contaminated by the presence of one who has, further, deceived—and cruelly deceived—an honourable and venerable gentleman, and who wisely suppressed that deceit from me when he sought my protection. I weep for

your depravity. I mourn over your corruption, but I cannot have a leper and a serpent for an inmate! Go forth," said Mr. Pecksniff, stretching out his hand, "go forth, young man! Like all who know you, I renounce you!"

Martin made a stride forward at these words, and Mr. Pecksniff stepped back so hastily that he missed his footing, tumbled over a chair, and fell in a sitting posture on the ground, where he remained, perhaps considering it the safest place.

"Look at him, Pinch," said Martin, "as he lies there —a cloth for dirty hands, a mat for dirty feet, a lying, fawning, servile hound! And, mark me, Pinch, the day will come when even you will find him out!"

He pointed at him as he spoke with unutterable contempt, and flinging his hat upon his head, walked from the house. He went on so rapidly that he was clear of the village before Tom Pinch overtook him.

"Are you going?" cried Tom.

"Yes," he answered sternly, "I am."

"Where?" asked Tom.

"I don't know. Yes, I do—to America."

III.—New Eden

Martin did not go to America alone, for Mark Tapley, formerly of the Blue Dragon, an inn in the village where Mr. Pecksniff resided, insisted on accompanying him.

"Now, sir, here am I, without a sitiwation," Mr. Tapley put it, "without any want of wages for a year to come—for I saved up (I didn't mean to do it, but I couldn't help it) at the Dragon; here am I with a liking for what's wentersome, and a liking for you, and a wish to come out strong under circumstances as would keep other men down—and will you take me, or will you leave me?"

Once landed in the United States, the question of what

to do arose, and Martin decided to invest his savings in buying land in the rising township of New Eden.

"Mark, you shall be a partner in the business," said Martin (Mark having invested £37 to Martin's £8); "an equal partner with myself. We are no longer master and servant. I will put in, as my additional capital, my professional knowledge, and half the annual profits, as long as it is carried on, shall be yours. Our business shall be commenced, as soon as we get to New Eden, under the name of Chuzzlewit and Tapley."

"Lord love you, sir," cried Mark, "don't have my name in it! I must be 'Co.,' I must."

"You shall have your own way, Mark."

"Thank 'ee sir! If any country gentleman thereabouts in the public way wanted such a thing as a skittle-ground made, I could take that part of the bis'ness, sir."

It was a long steamboat journey, but at last they stopped at Eden. The waters of the Deluge might have left it but a week ago, so choked with slime and matted growth was the hideous swamp which bore that name.

A man advanced towards them when they landed, walking slowly, leaning on a stick.

"Strangers!" he exclaimed.

"The very same," said Mark. "How are you, sir?"

"I've had the fever very bad," he answered faintly. "I haven't stood upright these many weeks. My eldest son has a chill upon him. My youngest died last week."

"I'm sorry for it, governor, with all my heart!" said Mark. "The goods is safe enough," he added, turning to Martin, and pointing to their boxes. "There ain't many people about to make away with 'em. What a comfort that is!"

"No," cried the man; "we've buried most of 'em. The rest have gone away. Them that we have here don't come out at night."

"The night air ain't quite wholesome, I suppose?" said Mark.

"It's deadly poison," was the answer.

Mark showed no more uneasiness than if it had been commended to him as ambrosia; but he gave the man his arm, and as they went along explained the nature of their purchase, and inquired where it lay. Close to his own log-house, he said.

It was a miserable cabin, rudely constructed of the trunks of trees, the door of which had either fallen down or been carried away. When they had brought up their chest, Martin gave way, and lay down on the ground, and wept aloud.

"Lord love you, sir," cried Mr. Tapley. "Don't do that. Anything but that! It never helped man, woman, or child over the lowest fence yet, sir, and it never will."

Mark stole out gently in the morning while his companion slept, and took a rough survey of the settlement. There were not above a score of cabins in the whole, and half of these appeared untenanted. Their own land was mere forest. He went down to the landing-place, where they had left their goods, and there he found some half a dozen men, wan and forlorn, who helped him to carry them to the log-house.

Martin was by this time stirring, but he had greatly changed, even in one night. He was very pale and languid, and spoke of pains and weakness.

"Don't give in, sir," said Mr. Tapley. "Why, you must be ill. Wait half a minute, till I run up to one of our neighbours and find out what's best to be took."

Martin was soon dangerously ill, very near his death. Mark, fatigued in mind and body, working all the day and sitting up at night, worn by hard living, surrounded by dismal and discouraging circumstances, never complained or yielded in the least degree. And then, when Martin was better, Mark was taken ill. He fought

against it; but the malady fought harder, and his efforts were vain.

"Floored for the present, sir," he said one morning, sinking back upon his bed, "but jolly."

And now it was Martin's turn to work and sit beside the bed and watch, and listen through the long, long nights to every sound in the gloomy wilderness.

Martin's reflections in those days slowly showed him his own selfishness, and when Mark Tapley recovered, he found a singular alteration in his companion.

"I don't know what to make of him," he thought one night. "He don't think of himself half as much as he did. It's a swindle. There'll be no credit in being jolly with *him!*"

The settlement was deserted. The only thing to be done was to return to England.

IV.—The Downfall of Pecksniff

Old Martin Chuzzlewit had for some time taken up his residence at Mr. Pecksniff's, and Martin and Mark Tapley went to the Blue Dragon on their return.

Martin at once sought out his grandfather, and marched into the house resolved on reconciliation. The old man listened to his appeal in silence; but Mr. Pecksniff spoke for him, and bade the young man begone.

But old Martin was awake to Pecksniff's character, and resolved to set Mr. Pecksniff right, and Mr. Pecksniff's victims, too.

Mark Tapley was the first person old Martin invited to see him. The old man had gone to London, and his grandson, Mary Graham, and Tom Pinch were all summoned to wait on him at a certain hour.

From Mark, old Martin learnt that his grandson was an altered man.

"There was always a deal of good in him," said Mr. Tapley, "but a little of it got crusted over somehow. I

can't say who rolled the paste of that 'ere paste, but—well, I think it may have been you, sir."

"So you think," said Martin, "that his old faults are in some degree of my creation?"

"Well, sir, I'm very sorry, but I can't unsay it. I don't believe that neither of you ever gave the other a fair chance."

Presently came a knock at the door, and young Martin entered. The old man pointed to a distant chair. Then came Tom Pinch and his sister, Ruth; and Mary Graham; and Mrs. Lupin, the landlady of the Blue Dragon; and John Westlock, an old friend of Tom Pinch's.

"Set the door open, Mark!" said Mr. Chuzzlewit.

The last appointed footstep sounded now upon the stairs. They all knew it. It was Mr. Pecksniff's; and Mr. Pecksniff was in a hurry, too, for he came bounding up with such uncommon expedition that he stumbled once or twice.

"Where is my venerable friend?" he cried upon the upper landing. And then, darting in and catching sight of old Martin, "My venerable friend is well?"

Mr. Pecksniff looked round upon the assembled group, and shook his head reproachfully.

"Oh, vermin!" said Mr. Pecksniff. "Oh bloodsuckers! Horde of unnatural plunderers and robbers! Leave him! Leave him, I say! Begone! Abscond! You had better be off! Wander over the face of the earth, young sirs, and do not presume to remain in a spot which is hallowed by the grey hairs of the patriarchal gentleman to whose tottering limbs I have the honour to act as an unworthy, but I hope an unassuming, prop and staff."

He advanced, with outstretched arms, to take the old man's hand; but he had not seen how the hand clasped and clutched the stick within its grasp. As he came smiling on, and got within his reach, old Martin, burning with indignation, rose up and struck him to the ground.

"Drag him away! Take him out of my reach!" said Martin. And Mr. Tapley actually did drag him away, and struck him upon the floor with his back against the opposite wall.

"Hear me, rascal!" said Mr. Chuzzlewit. "I have summoned you here to witness your own work. Come hither, my dear Martin! Why did we ever part? How could we ever part? How could you fly from me to him? The fault was mine no less than yours. Mark has told me so, and I have known it long. Mary, my love, come here."

She trembled, and was very pale; but he sat her in his own chair, and stood beside it holding her hand, Martin standing by him.

"The curse of our house," said the old man, looking kindly down upon her, "has been the love of self—has ever been the love of self." He drew one hand through Martin's arm, and standing so, between them, proceeded, "What's this? Her hand is trembling strangely. See if you can hold it."

Hold it! If he clasped it half as tightly as he did her waist—well, well!

But it was good in him that even then, in high fortune and happiness, he had still a hand left to stretch out to Tom Pinch.

Nicholas Nickleby

I.—A Yorkshire Schoolmaster

Mr. Nickleby, a country gentleman of small estate, having endeavoured to increase his scanty fortune by speculation, found himself ruined; he took to his bed

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Writing in 1848, Charles Dickens declared that when "Nicholas Nickleby" was begun in 1838 "there were then a good many cheap Yorkshire schools in existence. There are very few now."

(apparently resolved to keep that, at all events), and, after embracing his wife and children, very soon departed this life. So Mrs. Nickleby went to London to wait upon her brother-in-law, Mr. Ralph Nickleby, and with her two children, Nicholas, then nineteen, and Kate, a year or two younger, took lodgings in the Strand.

It was to these apartments that Ralph Nickleby, a hard, unscrupulous, cunning money-lender, came on receipt of the widow's note.

"Are you willing to work, sir?" said Ralph, frowning at his nephew.

"Of course I am," replied Nicholas haughtily.

"Then see here," said his uncle. "This caught my eyes this morning, and you may thank your stars for it."

With that Mr. Ralph Nickleby took a newspaper from his pocket and read the following advertisement.

"*Education.*—At Mr. Wackford Squeers' Academy, Dotheboys Hall, at the delightful village of Dotheboys, in Yorkshire, youths are boarded, clothed, booked, furnished with pocket-money, instructed in all languages living or dead, mathematics, orthography, geometry, trigonometry, the use of the globes, algebra, single-stick (if required), writing, arithmetic, fortification, and every other branch of classic literature. Terms, twenty guineas per annum. No extras, no vacations, and diet un-

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In the preface to the completed book the author mentioned that more than one Yorkshire schoolmaster laid claim to be the original of Squeers, and he had reason to believe "one worthy has actually consulted authorities learned in the law as to his having good grounds on which to rest an action for libel." But Squeers, as Dickens insisted, was the representative of a class, and not an individual. The Brothers Cheeryble were "no creations of the author's brain" Dickens also wrote; and in consequence of this statement "hundreds upon hundreds of letters from all sorts of people" poured in upon him to be forwarded "to the originals of the Brothers Cheeryble." They were the Brothers Grant, cotton-spinners, near Manchester. "Nicholas Nickleby" was completed in October, 1839.

paralleled. Mr. Squeers is in town, and attends daily from one till four, at the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill. N.B—An able assistant wanted. Annual salary, £5. A Master of Arts would be preferred."

"There!" said Ralph, folding the paper again. "Let him get that situation and his fortune's made. If he don't like that, let him get one for himself."

"I am ready to do anything you wish me," said Nicholas, starting gaily up. "Let us try our fortune with Mr. Squeers at once; he can but refuse."

"He won't do that," said Ralph. "He will be glad to have you on my recommendation. Make yourself of use to him, and you'll rise to be a partner in the establishment in no time."

Nicholas, having taken down the address of Mr. Wackford Squeers, the uncle and nephew at once went forth in quest of that accomplished gentleman.

"Perhaps you recollect me?" said Ralph, looking narrowly at the schoolmaster, as the Saracen's Head.

"You paid me a small account at each of my half-yearly visits to town for some years, I think, sir," replied Squeers, "for the parents of a boy who, unfortunately——"

"Unfortunately died at Dotheboys Hall," said Ralph, finishing the sentence. "And now let us come to business. You have advertised for an assistant. Do you really want one?"

"Certainly," answered Squeers.

"Here he is!" said Ralph. "My nephew Nicholas, hot from school, is just the man you want."

"I am afraid," said Squeers, perplexed with such an application from a youth of Nicholas's figure—"I am afraid the young man won't suit me."

"I fear, sir," said Nicholas, "that you object to my youth, and to not being a Master of Arts?"

"The absence of the college degree *is* an objection." replied Squeers, considerably puzzled by the contrast

between the simplicity of the nephew and the shrewdness of the uncle.

"Let me have two words with you," said Ralph. The two words were had apart; in a couple of minutes Mr. Wackford Squeers' announced that Mr. Nicholas Nickleby was from that moment installed in the office of first assistant master at Dotheboys Hall.

"At eight o'clock to-morrow morning, Mr. Nickleby," said Squeers, "the coach starts. You must be here at a quarter before, as we take some boys with us."

"And your fare down I have paid," growled Ralph. "So you'll have nothing to do but keep yourself warm."

II.—At Dotheboys Hall

"Past seven, Nickleby," said Mr. Squeers on the first morning after the arrival at Dotheboys Hall. "Come, tumble up. Here's a pretty go, the pump's froze. You can't wash yourself this morning, so you must be content with giving yourself a dry polish till we break the ice in the well, and can get a bucketful out for the boys."

Nicholas huddled on his clothes and followed Squeers across a yard to the school-room.

"There," said the schoolmaster, as they stepped in together, "this is our shop."

It was a bare and dirty room, the windows mostly stopped up with old copybooks and paper, and Nicholas looked with dismay at the old rickety desks and forms.

But the pupils!

Pale and haggard faces, lank and bony figures, boys of stunted growth, and others whose long and meagre legs would hardly bear their stooping bodies. Faces that told of young lives which from infancy had been one horrible endurance of cruelty and neglect. Little faces that should have been handsome, darkened with the scowl of sullen, dogged suffering. And yet, painful as the scene was, it had its grotesque features.

Mrs. Squeers, wearing a beaver bonnet of some antiquity on the top of a nightcap, stood at the desk, presiding over an immense basin of brimstone and treacle. This compound she administered to each boy in succession, using an enormous wooden spoon for the purpose.

"We purify the boys' blood now and then, Nickleby," said Squeers, when the operation was over.

A meagre breakfast followed; and then Mr. Squeers made his way to his desk, and called up the first class.

"This is the first class in English spelling and philosophy, Nickleby," said Squeers, beckoning Nicholas to stand beside him. "Now then, where's the first boy?"

"Please, sir, he's cleaning the back parlour window."

"So he is, to be sure," replied Squeers. "We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular education system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright. W-i-n, win; d-e-r, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of a book, he goes and does it. Where's the second boy?"

"Please, sir, he's weeding the garden."

"So he is," said Squeers. B-o-t, bot; t-i-n, bottin; n-e-y, ney, bottiney, noun substantive, a knowledge of plants. When he has learned that bottiney means a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows 'em. That's our system, Nickleby. Third boy, what's a horse?"

"A beast, sir," replied the boy.

"So it is," said Squeers. "A horse is a quadruped, and quadruped's Latin for beast, as everybody that's gone through the grammar knows. As you're perfect in that, go and look after *my* horse, and rub him down well, or I'll rub you down. The rest of the class go and draw water up, till somebody tells you to leave off, for it's washing day to-morrow, and they want the coppers filled."

The deficiencies of Mr. Squeers' scholastic methods were made up by lavish punishments, and Nicholas was compelled to stand by every day and see the unfortunate

pupils of Dotheboys Hall beaten without mercy, and know that he could do nothing to alleviate their misery.

In particular the plight of one poor boy, older than the rest, called Smike, a drudge whom starvation and ill-treatment had rendered dull and slow-witted, aroused all Nicholas's pity.

It was Smike who was the cause of Nicholas leaving Yorkshire.

Nicholas could endure the coarse and brutal language of Squeers, the displeasure of Mrs. Squeers (who decided that the new usher was "a proud, haughty, consequential, turned-up-nosed peacock," and that "she'd bring his pride down"), and the petty indignities this lady could inflict upon him. He bore with the bad food, dirty lodging, and daily round of squalid misery in the school.

But there came a day when Smike, unable to face his tormentors any longer, ran away. He was taken within four-and-twenty hours, and brought back, bedabbled with mud and rain, haggard and worn—to all appearance more dead than alive.

The work this unhappy drudge performed would have cost the establishment some ten or twelve shillings a week in the way of wages, and Squeers, who, as a matter of policy, made severe examples of all runaways from Dotheboys Hall, prepared to take full vengeance on Smike.

At the first blow Smike uttered a shriek of pain, and Nicholas Nickleby started up from his desk, and cried "Stop!" in a furious voice.

"Touch that boy at your peril. I will not stand by and see it done."

He had scarcely spoken, when Squeers, in a violent outbreak of wrath, spat upon him, and struck him across the face with his cane.

All Nicholas's feelings of rage, scorn, and indignation were concentrated into that moment, and, smarting at the blow, he sprang upon the schoolmaster, wrested the

weapon from him, and, pinning him by the throat, beat the ruffian until he roared for mercy.

Mrs. Squeers, with many shrieks for aid, hung on to the tail of her partner's coat, and tried to drag him from his infuriated adversary. With the result that when Nicholas, having thrown all his remaining strength into a half dozen finishing cuts, flung the schoolmaster from him with all the force he could muster, Mrs. Squeers was precipitated over an adjacent form; and Squeers, striking his head against it in his descent, lay at full length on the ground, stunned and motionless.

Nicholas, assured that Squeers was only stunned, and not dead, left the room, packed up his few clothes in a small leathern valise, marched boldly out by the front door, and struck into the road for London.

III.—Brighter Days for Nicholas

After many adventures in the quest of fortune, Nicholas, who had spurned all further connection with his uncle, stood one day outside a registry office in London. And as he stood there looking at the various placards in the window, an old gentleman, a sturdy old fellow in broad-skirted blue coat, happened to stop too.

Nicholas caught the old gentleman's eye, and began to wonder whether the stranger could by any possibility be looking for a clerk or secretary.

As the old gentleman moved away he noticed that Nicholas was about to speak, and good-naturedly stood still.

"I was only going to say," said Nicholas, "that I hoped you had some object in consulting those advertisements in the window."

"Ay, ay; what object now?" returned the old gentleman. "Did you think I wanted a situation now, eh? I thought the same of you, at first, upon my word I did."

"If you had thought so at last, too, sir, you would not

have been far from the truth," rejoined Nicholas. "The kindness of your face and manner—both so unlike any I have ever seen—tempt me to speak in a way I should never dream of doing to a stranger in this wilderness of London."

"Wilderness! Yes, it is; it is. It was a wilderness to me once. I came here barefoot—I have never forgotten it. What's the matter, how did it all come about?" said the old man, laying his hand on the shoulder of Nicholas, and walking him up the street. "In mourning, too, eh?" laying his finger on the sleeve of his black coat.

"My father," replied Nicholas.

"Bad thing for a young man to lose his father. Widowed mother, perhaps?"

Nicholas nodded.

"Brothers and sisters, too, eh?"

"One sister."

"Poor thing, poor thing! You're a scholar too, I dare say. Education's a great thing. I never had any. I admire it the more in others. A very fine thing. Tell me more of your history, all of it. No impertinent curiosity—no, no!"

There was something so earnest and guileless in the way this was said that Nicholas could not resist it. So he told his story, and, at the end, the old gentleman carried him straight off to the City, where they emerged in a quiet, shady square. The old gentleman led the way into some business premises, which had the inscription, "Cheeryble Brothers," on the doorpost, and stopped to speak to an elderly, large-faced clerk in the counting-house.

"Is my brother in his room, Tim?" said Mr. Cheeryble.

"Yes, he is, sir," said the clerk.

What was the amazement of Nicholas when his conductor took him into a room and presented him to another old gentleman, the very type and model of himself

—the same face and figure, the same clothes. Nobody could have doubted their being twin brothers.

"Brother Ned," said Nicholas's friend, "here is a young friend of mine that we must assist." Then brother Charles related what Nicholas had told him. And, after that, and some conversation between the brothers, Tim Linkinwater was called in, and brother Ned whispered a few words in his ear.

"Tim," said brother Charles, "you understand that we have an intention of taking this young gentleman into the counting-house."

Brother Ned remarked that Tim quite approved of it, and Tim, having nodded, said, with resolution, "But I'm not coming an hour later in the morning, you know. I'm not going to the country either. It's forty-four years since I first kept the books of Cheeryble Brothers. I've opened the safe all that time every morning at nine, and I've never slept out of the back attic one single night. This ain't the first time you've talked about superannuating me, Mr. Edwin and Mr. Charles; but, if you please, we'll make it the last, and drop the subject for evermore."

With which words Tim Linkinwater stalked out, with the air of a man who was thoroughly resolved not to be put down.

The brothers coughed.

"He must be done something with, brother Ned. We must disregard his scruples; he must be made a partner."

"Quite right, quite right, brother Charles. If he won't listen to reason, we must do it against his will. But, in the meantime, we are keeping our young friend, and the poor lady and her daughter will be anxious for his return. So let us say good-bye for the present." And at that the brothers hurried Nicholas out of the office, shaking hands with him all the way.

That was the beginning of brighter days for Nicholas and for Mrs. Nickleby and Kate. The brothers Cheeryble not only took Nicholas into their office, but a small

cottage at Bow, then quite out in the country, was found for the widow and her children.

There never was such a week of discoveries and surprises as the first week at that cottage. Every night when Nicholas came home, something new had been found. One day it was a grape-vine, and another day it was a boiler, and another day it was the key of the front parlour cupboard at the bottom of the water-butt, and so on through a hundred items.

As for Nicholas's work in the counting-house, Tim Linkinwater was satisfied with the young man the very first day.

Tim turned pale and stood watching with breathless anxiety when Nicholas made his first entry in the books of Cheeryble Brothers, while the two brothers looked on with smiling faces.

Presently the old clerk nodded his head, signifying "He'll do." But when Nicholas stopped to refer to some other page, Tim Linkinwater, unable to restrain his satisfaction any longer, descended from his stool, and caught him rapturously by the hand.

"He has done it!" said Tim, looking round triumphantly at his employers. "His capital 'B's' and 'D's' are exactly like mine; he dots his small 'i's' and crosses every 't.' There ain't such a young man in all London. The City can't produce his equal. I challenge the City to do it!"

IV.—The Brothers Cheeryble

In course of time the brothers Cheeryble, in their frequent visits to the cottage at Bow, often took with them their nephew Frank; and it also happened that Miss Madeline Bray, a ward of the brothers, was taken to the cottage to recover from a serious illness.

Nicholas, from the first time he had seen Madeline in the office of Cheeryble Brothers, had fallen in love with her; but he decided that as an honourable man no word

of love must pass his lips. While Kate Nickleby had been equally firm in declining to listen to any proposal from Frank.

It was some time after Madeline had left the cottage, and Nicholas and Kate had begun to try in good earnest to stifle their own regrets, and to live for each other and for their mother, when there came one evening, per Mr. Linkinwater, an invitation from the brothers to dinner on the next day but one.

"You may depend on it that this means something besides dinner," said Mrs. Nickleby solemnly.

When the great day arrived who should be there at the house of the brothers but Frank and Madeline.

"Young men," said brother Charles, "shake hands."

"I need no bidding to do that," said Nicholas.

"Nor I," rejoined Frank, and the two young men clasped hands heartily.

The old gentleman took them aside.

"I wish to see you friends—close and firm friends. Frank, look here! Mrs. Nickleby, will you come on the other side? This is a copy of the will of Madeline's grandfather, bequeathing her the sum of £12,000. Now, Frank, you were largely instrumental in recovering this document. The fortune is but a small one, but we love Madeline. Will you become a suitor for her hand?"

"No, sir. I interested myself in the recovery of that instrument, believing that her hand was already pledged elsewhere. In this, it seems, I judged hastily."

"As you always do, sir!" cried brother Charles. "How dare you think, Frank, that we could have you marry for money? How dare you go and make love to Mr. Nickleby's sister without telling us first, and letting us speak for you. Mr. Nickleby, sir, Frank judged hastily, but he judged, for once, correctly. Madeline's heart is occupied—give me your hand—it is occupied by you and worthily. She chooses you, Mr. Nickleby, as we, her dearest friends, would have her choose. Frank chooses

as we would have *him* choose. He should have your sister's little hand, sir, if she had refused it a score of times—ay, he should, and he shall! What? You are the children of a worthy gentleman. The time was, sir, when my brother Ned and I were two poor, simple-hearted boys, wandering almost barefoot to seek our fortunes. Oh, Ned, Ned, Ned, what a happy day this is for you and me! If our poor mother had only lived to see us now, Ned, how proud it would have made her dear heart at last!"

So Madeline gave her heart and fortune to Nicholas, and on the same day, and at the same time, Kate became Mrs. Frank Cheeryble. Madeline's money was invested in the firm of Cheeryble Brothers, in which Nicholas had become a partner, and before many years elapsed the business was carried on in the names of "Cheeryble and Nickleby."

Tim Linkinwater condescended, after much entreating and brow-beating, to accept a share in the house; but he could never be prevailed upon to suffer the publication of his name as partner, and always persisted in the punctual and regular discharge of his clerkly duties.

The twin brothers retired. Who needs to be told that they were happy?

The first act of Nicholas, when he became a rich and prosperous merchant, was to buy his father's old house. As time crept on, and there came gradually about him a group of lovely children, it was altered and enlarged; but no tree was rooted up, nothing with which there was any association of bygone times was ever removed or changed. Mr. Squeers, having come within the meshes of the law over some nefarious scheme of Ralph Nickleby's, suffered transportation beyond the seas, and with his disappearance Dotheboys Hall was broken up for good.

Oliver Twist

I.—The Parish Boy

OLIVER was born in the workhouse, and his mother died the same night. Not even a promised reward of £10 could produce any information as to the boy's father or the mother's name. The woman was young, frail, and delicate—a stranger to the parish.

"How comes he to have any name at all, then?" said Mrs. Mann (who was responsible for the early bringing up of the workhouse children) to Mr. Bumble, the parish beadle.

The beadle drew himself up with great pride, and said, "I invented it. We name our foundings in alphabetical order. The last was a S; Swubble I named him. This was a T; Twist I named *him*. I have got names ready made to the end of the alphabet, and all the way through it again, when we come to Z."

"Why, you're quite a literary character, sir," said Mrs. Mann.

Oliver, being now nine years old, was removed from the tender mercies of Mrs. Mann, in whose wretched

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"The Adventures of Oliver Twist," published serially in "Bentley's Miscellany," 1837–39, and in book form in 1838, was the second of Dickens's novels. It lacks the exuberance of "Pickwick," and is more limited in its scenes and characters than any other novel he wrote, excepting "Hard Times" and "Great Expectations." But the description of the workhouse, its inmates and governors, is done in Dickens's best style, and was a frontal attack on the Poor Law administration of the time. Bumble, indeed, has passed into common use as the typical workhouse official of the least satisfactory sort. No less powerful than the picture of Oliver's wretched childhood is the description of the thieves' kitchen, presided over by Fagin. Bill Sikes and the Artful Dodger are household words for criminals, and the character of Fagin is drawn with wonderful skill in this terrible view of the underworld of London.

home not one kind word or look had ever lighted the gloom of his infant years, and was taken into the workhouse.

Now the members of the board, who were long-headed men, had just established the rule that all poor people should have the alternative (for they would compel nobody, not they) of being starved by a gradual process in the house, or by a quick one out of it. All relief was inseparable from the workhouse, and the thin gruel issued three times a day to its inmates.

The system was in full operation for the first six months after Oliver Twist's admission, and boys having generally excellent appetites, Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation. Each boy had one porringer of gruel, and no more. At last the boys got so voracious and wild with hunger, that one, who was tall for his age and hadn't been used to that sort of thing (for his father had kept a small cook's shop), hinted darkly to his companions that unless he had another basin of gruel *per diem* he was afraid he might some night happen to eat the boy who slept next him, a weakly youth of tender age. He had a wild, hungry eye, and they implicitly believed him. A council was held, lots were cast who should walk up to the master after supper that evening and ask for more, and it fell to Oliver Twist.

The evening arrived, the boys took their places. The master, in his cook's uniform, stationed himself at the copper to ladle out the gruel; his pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him, the gruel was served out, and a long grace was said over the short commons.

The gruel disappeared, the boys whispered to each other, and winked at Oliver, while his next neighbours nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table, and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in

hand, said, somewhat alarmed at his own temerity, "Please, sir, I want some more."

The master was a fat, healthy man, but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupified astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then said, "What!"

"Please, sir," replied Oliver, "I want some more."

The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle, pinioned him in his arms, and shrieked aloud for the beadle.

The board were sitting in solemn conclave when Mr. Bumble rushed into the room in great excitement, and addressing a gentleman in a high chair, said, "Mr. Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir! Oliver Twist has asked for more!"

There was a general start. Horror was depicted on every countenance.

"For *more?*" said the chairman. "Compose yourself, Bumble, and answer me distinctly. Do I understand that he asked for more, after he had eaten the supper allotted by the dietary?"

"He did, sir," replied Bumble.

"That boy will be hung," said a gentleman in a white waistcoat. "I know that boy will be hung."

Nobody disputed the opinion. Oliver was ordered into instant confinement, and a bill was next morning pasted on the outside of the workhouse gate, offering a reward of five pounds to anybody who would take Oliver Twist off their hands. In other words, five pounds and Oliver Twist were offered to any man or woman who wanted an apprentice to any trade, business, or calling.

Mr. Gamfield, the chimney sweep, was the first to respond to this offer.

"It's a nasty trade," said the chairman of the board.

"Young boys have been smothered in chimneys before now," said another member.

"That's because they damped the straw afore they lit it in the chimbley to make 'em come down again," said

Gamfield. "That's all smoke, and no blaze; vereas smoke only sinds him to sleep, and that ain't no use in making a boy come down. Boys is wery obstinite and wery lazy, gen'l'men, and there's nothink like a good hot blaze to make 'em come down with a run. It's humane, too, gen'l'men, acause, even if they've stuck in the chimbley, roasting their feet makes 'em struggle to hextricate theirselves."

The board consented to hand over Oliver to the chimney-sweep (the premium being reduced to £3 10s.), but the magistrates declined to sanction the indentures, and it was Mr. Sowerberry, the undertaker, who finally relieved the board of their responsibility.

Mrs. Sowerberry's ill-treatment drove Oliver to flight. He left the house in the early morning before anyone was stirring, struck across fields, and gained the high road outside the town. A milestone intimated that it was seventy miles to London. In London he would be beyond the reach of Mr. Bumble; to London he would trudge.

II.—The Artful Dodger

It was on the seventh morning after he had left his native place that Oliver limped slowly into the town of Barnet. Tired and hungry he sat down on a doorstep, and presently was roused by the question "Hallo, my covey, what's the row?"

The boy who addressed this inquiry to the young wayfarer was about his own age, but one of the queerest-looking boys that Oliver had ever seen. He was short for his age, and dirty, and he had about him all the airs and manners of a man. He wore a man's coat which reached nearly to his heels, and he had turned the cuffs back half-way up his arm to get his hands out of the sleeves. Altogether he was as roystering and swaggering a young gentleman as ever stood four feet six in his bluchers.

"You want grub," said this strange boy, helping Oliver to rise; "and you shall have it. I'm at low-water-mark myself, only one bob and a magpie; but as far as it goes, I'll fork out and stump."

"Going to London?" said the strange boy, while they sat and finished a meal in a small public-house.

"Yes."

"Got any lodgings?"

"No."

"Money?"

"No."

The strange boy whistled.

"I suppose you want some place to sleep in to-night, don't you? Well, I've got to be in London to-night, and I know a 'spectable old genelman as lives there, wot'll give you lodgings for nothink, and never ask for the change—that is, if any genelman he knows interduces you."

This unexpected offer of shelter was too tempting to be resisted, and on the way to London, where they arrived at nightfall, Oliver learnt that his friend's name was Jack Dawkins, but that he was known among his intimates as "The Artful Dodger."

In Field Lane, in the slums of Saffron Hill, the Dodger pushed open the door of a house, and drew Oliver within.

"Now, then," cried a voice, in reply to his whistle.

"Plummy and slam," said the Dodger.

This seemed to be a watchword, for a man at once appeared with a candle.

"There's two on you," said the man. "Who's the t'other one, and where does he come from?"

"A new pal from Greenland," replied Jack Dawkins. "Is Fagin upstairs?"

"Yes, he's sortin the wipes. Up with you."

The room that Oliver was taken into was black with age and dirt. Several rough beds, made of old sacks,

were huddled side by side on the floor. Seated round the table were four or five boys, none older than the Dodger, smoking long clay pipes, and drinking spirits with the air of middle-aged men. An old shrivelled Jew, of repulsive face, was standing over the fire, dividing his attention between a frying-pan and a clothes-horse full of silk handkerchiefs.

The Dodger whispered a few words to the Jew, and then said aloud, "This is him, Fagin, my friend Oliver Twist."

The Jew grinned. "We are very glad to see you, Oliver—very."

A good supper Oliver had that night, and a heavy sleep, and a hearty breakfast next morning.

When the breakfast was cleared away, Fagin, who was quite a merry old gentleman, and the Dodger and another boy named Charley Bates, played at a very curious game. The merry old gentleman, placing a snuff-box in one pocket of his trousers, a note-book in the other, and a watch in his waistcoat, and sticking a mock diamond pin in his shirt, and spectacle-case and handkerchief in his coat-pocket, trotted up and down the room in imitation of the manner in which old gentlemen walk about the streets; while the Dodger and Charley Bates had to get all these things out of his pockets without being observed. It was so very funny that Oliver laughed till the tears ran down his face.

A few days later, and he understood the full meaning of the game.

The Dodger and Charley Bates had taken Oliver out for a walk, and after sauntering along, they suddenly pulled up short on Clerkenwell Green, at the sight of an old gentleman reading at a bookstall. So intent was he over his book that he might have been sitting in an easy chair in his study.

To Oliver's horror, the Dodger plunged his hand into the gentleman's pocket, drew out a handkerchief, and

handed it to Bates. Then both boys ran away round the corner at full speed. Oliver, frightened at what he had seen, ran off, too; the old gentleman, at the same moment missing his handkerchief, and seeing Oliver scudding off, concluded he was the thief, and gave chase, still holding his book in his hand.

The cry of "Stop thief!" was raised. Oliver was knocked down, captured, and taken to the police-station by a constable.

The magistrate was still sitting, and Oliver would have been convicted there and then but for the arrival of the bookseller.

"Stop, stop! Don't take him away! I saw it all! I keep the bookstall," cried the man. "I saw three boys, two others, and the prisoner here. The robbery was committed by another boy. I saw that this one was amazed by it."

Oliver was acquitted. But he had fainted. Mr. Brownlow, for that was the name of the old gentleman, shocked and moved at the boy's deathly whiteness, straightway carried the boy off in a cab to his own house in a quiet, shady street near Pentonville.

III.—Back in Fagin's Den

For many days Oliver remained insensible to the goodness of his new friends. But all that careful nursing could do was done, and he slowly and surely recovered. Mr. Brownlow, a kind-hearted old bachelor, took the greatest interest in his *protégé*, and Oliver implored him not to turn him out of doors to wander in the streets.

"My dear child," said the old gentleman, moved by the warmth of Oliver's appeal, "you need not be afraid of my deserting you. I have been deceived before in people I have endeavored to benefit, but I feel strongly disposed to trust you, nevertheless; and I am more interested in your behalf than I can well account for. Let

me hear your story; speak the truth to me, and you shall not be friendless while I am alive."

A certain unmistakable likeness in Oliver to a lady's portrait that was on the wall of the room struck Mr. Brownlow. What connection could there be between the original of the portrait, and this poor child?

But before Mr. Brownlow had heard Oliver's story he had lost the boy. For Fagin, horribly uneasy lest Oliver should be the means of betraying his late companions, resolved to get him back as quickly as possible. To accomplish his evil purpose, Nancy, a young woman who belonged to Fagin's gang, and who had seen Oliver, was prevailed upon to undertake the commission.

Now, the very evening before Oliver was to tell his story to Mr. Brownlow, the boy, anxious to prove his honesty, had set out with some books on an errand to the bookseller at Clerkenwell Green.

"You are to say," said Mr. Brownlow, "that you have brought these books back, and that you have come to pay the four pound ten I owe him. This is a five-pound note, so you will have to bring me back ten shillings change."

"I won't be ten minutes, sir," replied Oliver eagerly.

He was walking briskly along, thinking how happy and contented he ought to feel, when he was startled by a young woman screaming out very loud, "Oh, my dear brother!" He had hardly looked up when he was stopped by having a pair of arms thrown tight round his neck.

"Don't!" cried Oliver, struggling. "Let go of me. Who is it? What are you stopping me for?"

The only reply to this was a great number of loud lamentations from the young woman who had embraced him.

"I've found him! Oh, Oliver, Oliver! Oh, you naughty boy to make me suffer such distress on your ac-

count! Come home, dear, come. Oh, I've found him! Thank gracious goodness heavens, I've found him!"

The young woman burst out crying, and a couple of women standing by asked what was the matter.

"Oh, ma'am," replied the young woman, "he ran away from his parents, and went and joined a set of thieves and bad characters, and almost broke his mother's heart."

"Young wretch!" said one woman.

"Go home, do, you little brute," said the other.

"I'm not," replied Oliver, greatly alarmed. "I don't know her. I haven't any sister or father or mother. I'm an orphan; I live at Pentonville."

"Oh, only hear him, how he braves it out," cried the young woman. "Make him come home, or he'll kill his dear mother and father, and break my heart!"

"What the devil's this?" said a man, bursting out of a beer-shop, with a white dog at his heels. "Young Oliver! Come home to your poor mother, you young dog!"

"I don't belong to them. I don't know them! Help, help!" cried Oliver, struggling in the man's powerful grasp.

"Help!" repeated the man. "Yes, I'll help you, you young rascal! What books are these? You've been a-stealin' 'em, have you? Give 'em here!"

With these words the man tore the volumes from his grasp, and struck him on the head.

Weak with recent illness, stupefied by the blows and the suddenness of the attack, terrified by the brutality of the man—who was none other than Bill Sikes, the roughest of all Fagin's pupils—what could one poor child do? Darkness had set in; it was a low neighbourhood; resistance was useless. Sikes and Nancy hurried the boy on between them through courts and alleys till, once more, he was within the dreadful house where the Dodger had first brought him. Long after the gas-lamps

were lighted, Mr. Brownlow sat waiting in his parlour. The servant had run up the street twenty times to see if there were any traces of Oliver. The housekeeper had waited anxiously at the open door. But no Oliver returned.

IV.—Oliver Falls among Friends

Mr. Bill Sikes having an important house-breaking engagement with his fellow-robber, Mr. Toby Crackit, at Shepperton, decided that Oliver must accompany him.

It was a detached house, and the night was dark as pitch when Sikes and Crackit, dragging Oliver along, climbed the wall and approached a narrow, shuttered window. In vain Oliver implored them to let him go.

"Listen, you young limb," whispered Sikes, when a crowbar had overcome the shutter, and the lattice had been opened. "I'm going to put you through there." Drawing a dark lantern from his pocket, he added, "Take this light; go softly up the steps straight afore you, and along the hall to the street door; unfasten it, and let us in."

The boy was put through the window, and Sikes, pointing to the door with his pistol, told him if he faltered he would shoot him.

Hardly had Oliver advanced a few yards before Sikes called out, "Back! back!"

Startled, the boy dropped the lantern, uncertain whether to advance or fly.

The cry was repeated—a light appeared—a vision of two terrified, half-dressed men at the top of the stairs swam before his eyes—a flash—a loud noise—and he staggered back.

Sikes got him out of the window before the smoke cleared away, and fired his pistol after the men, who were already in retreat.

"Clasp your arm tighter," said Sikes. "Give me a

shawl here. They've hit him. Quick! The boy is bleeding."

Then came the loud ringing of a bell, and the shouts of men, and the sensation of being carried over uneven ground at a rapid pace. And then the noises grew confused in the distance, and Oliver saw and heard no more.

Sikes, finding the chase too hot, was compelled to leave Oliver in a ditch and make his escape with his friend Crackit.

It was morning when Oliver awoke. His left arm was rudely bandaged in a shawl, and the bandage was saturated with blood. Weak and dizzy, he yet felt that if he remained where he was he would surely die, and so he staggered to his feet. The only house in sight was the one he had entered a few hours earlier, and he bent his steps towards it. He pushed against the garden-gate—it was unlocked. He tottered across the lawn, climbed the steps, knocked faintly at the door, and, his whole strength failing him, sank down against the little portico.

Mr. Giles, the butler and general steward of the house, who had fired the shot and led the pursuit, was just explaining the exciting events of the night to his fellow-servants of the kitchen when Oliver's knock was heard. With considerable reluctance the door was opened, and then the group, peeping timorously over each other's shoulders, beheld no more formidable object than poor little Oliver Twist, speechless and exhausted.

"Here he is!" bawled Giles. "Here's one of the thieves, ma'am! Wounded, miss! I shot him!"

They lugged the fainting boy into the hall, and then in the midst of all the noise and commotion, there was heard a sweet and gentle voice, which quelled it in an instant.

"Giles!" whispered the voice from the stairhead. "Hush! You frighten my aunt as much as the thieves did. Is the poor creature much hurt?"

"Wounded desperate, miss," replied Giles.

After a hasty consultation with her aunt, the same gentle speaker bade them carry the wounded person upstairs, and send to Chertsey at all speed for a constable and a doctor. The latter arrived when the young lady and her aunt, Mrs. Maylie, were at breakfast, and his visit to the sick-room changed the state of affairs. On his return he begged Mrs. Maylie and her niece to accompany him upstairs.

In lieu of the dogged, black-visaged ruffian they had expected to see, there lay a mere child, sunk in a deep sleep.

The ladies could not believe this delicate boy was a criminal, and when, on waking up, he told them his simple history, they were determined to prevent his arrest.

The doctor undertook to save the boy, and to that end entered the kitchen where Mr. Giles, Brittles, his assistant, and the constable were regaling themselves with ale.

"How is the patient, sir?" asked Giles.

"So-so," returned the doctor. "I'm afraid you've got yourself into a scrape there, Mr. Giles. Are you a Protestant? And what are *you?*" turning sharply on Brittles.

"Yes, sir; I hope so," faltered Mr. Giles, turning very pale, for the doctor spoke with strange severity.

"I'm the same as Mr. Giles, sir," said Brittles, starting violently.

"Then tell me this, both of you," said the doctor. "Are you going to take upon yourselves to swear that that boy upstairs is the boy that was put through the little window last night? Come, out with it! Pay attention to the reply, constable. Here's a house broken into, and a couple of men catch a moment's glimpse of a boy in the midst of gunpowder-smoke, and in all the distraction of alarm and darkness. Here's a boy comes to that very same house next morning, and because he happens to have his arm tied up, these men lay violent hands upon him, place his life in danger, and swear he is the thief.

I ask you again," thundered the doctor, " are you, on your solemn oaths, able to identify that boy? "

Of course, under these circumstances, as Mr. Giles and Brittles couldn't identify the boy, the constable retired, and the attempted robbery was followed by no arrests.

Oliver Twist grew up in the peaceful and happy home of Mrs. Maylie, under the tender affection of two good women. Later on, Mr. Brownlow was found, and Oliver's character restored. It was proved, too, that the portrait Mr. Brownlow possessed was that of Oliver's mother, whom its owner had once esteemed dearly. Betrayed by fate, the unhappy woman had sought refuge in the workhouse, only to die in giving birth to her son.

In that same workhouse, where his authority had formerly been so considerable, Mr. Bumble came—as a pauper—to die.

Tragic was the fate of poor Nancy. Suspected by Fagin of plotting against her accomplices, the Jew so worked on Sikes that the savage housebreaker murdered her.

But neither Fagin nor Sikes escaped.

For the Jew was taken and condemned to death, and in the condemned cell came the recollection to him of all the men he had known who had died upon the scaffold, some of them through his means.

Sikes, when the news of Nancy's murder got abroad, was hunted by a furious crowd. He had taken refuge in an old, disreputable uninhabited house, known to his accomplices, which stood right over the Thames, in Jacob's Island, not far from Dockhead; but the pursuit was hot, and the only chance of safety lay in getting to the river.

At the very moment when the crowd was forcing its way into the house, Sikes made a running noose to slip beneath his arm-pits, and so lower himself to a ditch beneath. He was out on the roof, and then, when the loop was over his head, the face of the murdered girl seemed to stare at him.

"The eyes again!" he cried, in an unearthly screech, and threw up his arms in horror.

Staggering, as if struck by lightning, he lost his balance and tumbled over the parapet. The noose was on his neck. It ran up with his weight, tight as a bowstring. He fell for five-and-thirty feet, and then, after a sudden jerk, and a terrible convulsion of the limbs, swung lifeless against the wall.

Old Curiosity Shop

I.—Little Nell and Her Grandfather

THE shop was one of those receptacles for old and curious things which seem to crouch in odd corners of London. There were suits of mail standing like ghosts in armour, rusty weapons of various kinds, tapestry, and strange furniture that might have been designed in dreams.

The haggard aspect of a little old man, with long grey hair, who stood within, was wonderfully suited

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"The Old Curiosity Shop" was begun by Dickens in his new weekly publication called "Master Humphrey's Clock," in 1840, and its early chapters were written in the first person. But its author soon got rid of the impediments that pertained to "Master Humphrey," and "when the story was finished," Dickens wrote, "I caused the few sheets of 'Master Humphrey's Clock,' which had been printed in connection with it, to be cancelled." "The Old Curiosity Shop" won a host of friends for the author; A. C. Swinburne even declared Little Nell equal to any character in fiction. The lonely figure of the child with grotesque and wild, but not impossible, companions, took the hearts of all readers by storm, and the death of Little Nell moved thousands to tears. While the story was appearing, Tom Hood, then unknown to Dickens, wrote an essay "tenderly appreciative" of Little Nell, "and of all her shadowy kith and kin." The immense and deserved popularity of the book is shown by the universal acquaintance with Mrs. Jarley, and the common use of the phrase "Codlin's the friend—not Short."

to the place. Nothing in the whole collection looked older or more worn than he.

Confronting the old man was a young man of dissipated appearance, and high words were taking place.

"I tell you again I want to see my sister," said the younger man. "You can't change the relationship, you know. If you could, you'd have done it long ago. But as I may have to wait some time I'll call in a friend of mine, with your leave."

At this he brought in a companion of even more dissolute appearance than himself.

"There, it's Dick Swiveller," said the young fellow, pushing him in.

"But is the old min agreeable?" said Mr. Swiveller in an undertone. "What is the odds so long as the fire of soul is kindled at the taper of conviviality, and the wing of friendship never moults a feather! But, only one little whisper, Fred—*is* the old min friendly?"

Mr. Swiveller then leaned back in his chair and relapsed into silence; only to break it by observing, "Gentlemen, how does the case stand? Here is a jolly old grandfather, and here is a wild young grandson. The jolly old grandfather says to the wild young grandson, 'I have brought you up and educated you, Fred; you have bolted a little out of the course, and you shall never have another chance.' The wild young grandson makes answer, 'You're as rich as can be, why can't you stand a trifle for your grown up relation?' Then the plain question is, ain't it a pity this state of things should continue, and how much better it would be for the old gentleman to hand over a reasonable amount of tin, and make it all right and comfortable?"

"Why do you persecute me?" said the old man, turning to his grandson. "Why do you bring your profligate companions here? I am poor. You have chosen your own path, follow it. Leave Nell and me to toil and work."

"Nell will be a woman soon," returned the other; "She'll forget her brother unless he shows himself sometimes."

The door opened, and the child herself appeared, followed by an elderly man so low in stature as to be quite a dwarf, though his head and face were large enough for the body of a giant.

Mr. Swiveller turned to the dwarf and, stooping down, whispered audibly in his ear. "The watchword to the old min is—fork."

"Is what?" demanded Quilp, for that—Daniel Quilp—was the dwarf's name.

"Is fork, sir, fork," replied Mr. Swiveller, slapping his pocket. "You are awake, sir?"

The dwarf nodded; the grandson, having announced his intention of repeating his visit, left the house accompanied by his friend.

"So much for dear relations," said Quilp, with a sour look. He put his hand into his breast, and pulled out a bag. "Here, I brought it myself, as, being in gold, it was too large and heavy for Nell to carry. I would I knew in what good investment all these supplies are sunk. But you are a deep man, and keep your secret close."

"My secret!" said the old man, with a haggard look. "Yes, you're right—I keep it close—very close."

He said no more, but, taking the money, locked it in an iron safe.

That night, as on many a night previous, Nell's grandfather went out, leaving the child in the strange house alone, to return in the early morning.

Quilp, to whom the old man had again applied for money, learnt of these nocturnal expeditions, and sent no answer, but came in person to the old curiosity shop.

The old man was feverish and excited as he impatiently addressed the dwarf.

"Have you brought me any money?"

"No," returned Quilp.

"Then," said the old man, clenching his hands, "the child and I are lost. No recompense for the time and money lost!"

"Neighbour," said Quilp, "you have no secret from me now. I know that all those sums of money you have had from me have found their way to the gaming-table."

"I never played for gain of mine, or love of play," cried the old man fiercely. "My winnings would have been bestowed to the last farthing on a young sinless child, whose life they would have sweetened and made happy. But I never won."

"Dear me!" said Quilp. "The last advance was £70, and it went in one night. And so it comes to pass that I hold every security you could scrape together, and a bill of sale upon the stock and property."

So saying, he nodded, deaf to all entreaties for further loans, and took his leave.

The house was no longer theirs. Mr. Quilp encamped on the premises, and the goods were sold. A day was fixed for their removal.

"Grandfather, let us begone from this place," said little Nell; "let us wander barefoot through the world, rather than linger here."

"We will," answered the old man. "We will travel afoot through the fields and woods, and by the side of rivers and trust ourselves to God. Thou and I together, Nell, may be cheerful and happy yet, and learn to forget this time, as if it had never been."

II.—Messrs. Codlin and Short

The sun was setting when little Nell and her grandfather, who had been wandering many days, reached the wicket gate of a country churchyard.

Two men were seated in easy attitudes on the grass

by the church—two men of the class of itinerant showmen, exhibitors of the freaks of Punch—and they had come there to make needful repairs in the stage arrangements, for one was engaged in binding together a small gallows with thread, while the other was fixing a new black wig upon the head of a puppet.

"Are you going to show 'em to-night? Are you?" said the old man.

"That's the intention, governor, and unless I'm much mistaken, my partner, Tommy Codlin, is a-calculating at this minute what we've lost through your coming upon us. Cheer up, Tommy, it can't be much."

To this Mr. Codlin replied in a surly, grumbling manner, "I don't care if we haven't lost a farden, but you're too free. If you stood in front of the curtain, and see the public's faces as I do, you'd know human natur' better."

"Ah! it's been the spoiling of you, Tommy, your taking to that branch," rejoined his companion. "When you played the ghost in the reg'lar drama in the fairs, you believed in everything—except ghosts. But now you're a universal mistruster."

"Never mind," said Mr. Codlin, with the air of a discontented philosopher; "I know better now; p'r'aps I'm sorry for it. Look here, here's all this Judy's clothes falling to pieces again."

The child, seeing they were at a loss for a needle and thread, timidly proposed to mend it for them, and even Mr. Codlin had nothing to urge against a proposal so reasonable.

"If you're wanting a place to stop at," said Short, "I should advise you to take up at the same house with us. That's it, the long, low, white house there. It's very cheap."

The public-house was kept by a fat old landlord and landlady, who made no objection to receiving their new guests, but praised Nelly's beauty, and were at once prepossessed in her behalf.

"We're going on to the races," said Short next morning to the travellers. "If that's your way, and you'd like to have us for company, let us go together. If you prefer going alone, only say the word, and we shan't trouble you."

"We'll go with you," said the old man. "Nell—with them, with them."

They stopped that night at an ancient roadside inn called the Jolly Sandboys, and supper being in preparation, Nelly and her grandfather had not long taken their seats by the kitchen fire before they fell asleep.

"Who are they?" whispered the landlord.

"No good, I suppose," said Mr. Codlin.

"They're no harm," said Short, "depend upon that. It's very plain, besides, that they're not used to this way of life. Don't tell me that handsome child has been in the habit of prowling about as she's done these last two or three days. I know better. The old man ain't in his right mind. Haven't you noticed how anxious he is always to get on—furder away—furder away? Mind what I say, he has given his friends the slip, and persuaded this delicate young creatur all along of her fondness for him to be his guide—where to, he knows no more than the man in the moon. I'm not a-going to stand that!"

"You're not a-going to stand that!" cried Mr. Codlin, glancing at the clock, and counting the minutes to supper time.

"I," repeated Short, emphatically and slowly, "am not a-going to stand it. I am not a-going to see this fair young child a-falling into bad hands. Therefore, when they develop an intention of parting company from us, I shall take measures for detaining of 'em, and restoring 'em to their friends, who, I dare say, have had their disconsolation pasted up on every wall in London by this time."

"Short," said Mr. Codlin, looking up with eager eyes,

"it's possible there may be uncommon good sense in what you've said. If there should be a reward, Short, remember that we're partners in everything!"

Before Nell retired to rest in her poor garret she was a little startled by the appearance of Mr. Thomas Codlin at her door.

"Nothing's the matter, my dear; only I'm your friend. Perhaps you haven't thought so, but it's me that's your friend—not him. I'm the real, open-hearted man. Short's very well, and seems kind, but he overdoes it. Now, I don't."

The child was puzzled, and could not tell what to say.

"Take my advice; as long as you travel with us, keep as near me as you can. Recollect the friend. Codlin's the friend, not Short. Short's very well as far as he goes, but the real friend is Codlin—not Short."

III.—Jarley's Waxwork

Codlin and Short stuck so close to Nell and her grandfather that the child grew frightened, especially at the unwonted attentions of Mr. Thomas Codlin. The bustle of the racecourse enabled them to escape, and once more the travellers were alone.

It was a few days later when, as the afternoon was wearing away, they came upon a caravan drawn up by the roadside. It was a smart little house upon wheels, not a gipsy caravan, for at the open door sat a Christian lady, stout and comfortable, taking her tea upon a drum covered with a white napkin.

"Hey!" cried the lady of the caravan, seeing the old man and the child walking slowly by. "Yes, to be sure I saw you there with my own eyes! And very sorry I was to see you in company with a Punch; a low, practical, wulgar wretch that people should scorn to look at."

"I was not there by choice," returned the child. "We don't know our way, and the two men were very kind to us, and let us travel with them. Do you know them, ma'am?"

"Know 'em, child! Know *them!* But you're young and inexperienced. Do I look as if I knowed 'em? Does the caravan look as if *it* knowed 'em?"

"No, ma'am, no. I beg your pardon."

It was granted immediately. And then the lady of the caravan, finding the travellers were hungry, handed them a tea-tray with bread-and-butter and a knuckle of ham; and finding they were tired, took them into the caravan, which was bound for the nearest town, some eight miles off.

As the caravan moved slowly along, its owner began to talk to Nell, and presently pulled out a large roll of canvas. "There child," she said, "read that!"

Nell read aloud the inscription, "JARLEY'S WAX-WORK."

"That's me," said the lady complacently.

"I never saw any waxwork, ma'am," said Nell. "Is it funnier than Punch?"

"Funnier!" said Mrs. Jarley, in a shrill voice. "It is not funny at all. It's calm and—what's that word again—critical? No—classical, that's it—it's calm and classical."

In the course of the journey Mrs. Jarley was so taken with the child that she proposed to engage her, and as Nell would not be separated from her grandfather, he was included in the agreement.

"What I want your granddaughter for," said Mrs. Jarley, "is to point 'em out to the company, for she has a way with her that people wouldn't think unpleasant. It's not a common offer, bear in mind; it's Jarley's Waxwork. The duty's very light and genteel, the exhibition takes place in assembly rooms or town halls. There is none of your open-air wagrancy at Jarley's,

remember. And the price of admission is only sixpence."

"We are very much obliged to you, ma'am," said Nell, speaking for her grandfather, "and thankfully accept your offer."

"And you'll never be sorry for it," returned Mrs. Jarley. "So, as that's all settled, let us have a bit of supper."

The next morning, the caravan having arrived at the town, and the waxworks having been unpacked in the town hall, Mrs. Jarley sat down in an armchair in the centre of the room, and began to instruct Nell in her duty.

"That," said Mrs. Jarley in her exhibition tone, "is an unfortunate maid of honour in the time of Queen Elizabeth, who died from pricking her finger in consequence of working on a Sunday. Observe the blood which is trickling from her finger, also the gold-eyed needle of the period, with which she is at work."

Nell found in the lady of the caravan a kind and considerate person, who had not only a peculiar relish for being comfortable herself, but for making everybody about her comfortable also.

But the child noticed that her grandfather grew more and more listless and vacant, and soon a greater sorrow was to come. The passion for gambling revived in the old man one evening, when he and Nell, out walking in the country, took passing shelter from a storm in a small public-house. He saw men playing cards, and, allowed to join them, lost. The next night he went off alone, and Nell, finding him gone, followed. Her grandfather was with the card-players near an encampment of gypsies, and, to her horror, he promised to bring more money.

Flight was now the only thing possible, before her grandfather should steal. How else could he get the money?

IV.—Beyond the Pale

Flight by water! For two days they travelled on a barge, Nell sitting with her grandfather in the boat. Rugged and noisy fellows were the bargemen, and quite brutal among themselves, though civil enough to their passengers. The barge floated into the wharf to which it belonged, and now came flight by land through a strange, unfriendly town. The travellers were penniless, and at nightfall took refuge in a deep doorway.

A man, miserably clad and begrimed with smoke, found them here, and, learning they were homeless, promised them shelter by the fire of a great furnace.

A dark and blackened region was this they were in. On every side tall chimneys poured out their plague of smoke, and at night the smoke was changed to fire, and chimneys spurted flame. Struggling vegetation sickened and sank under the hot breath of kiln and furnace. The people—men, women, and children—wan in their looks and ragged in their attire, tended the engines, or scowled, half naked, from the doorless houses.

That night Nell and her grandfather lay down with nothing between them and the sky. A penny loaf was all they had had that day, and very weak and spent the child felt.

With morning she was weaker still, and a loathing of food prevented her sharing the loaf bought with their last penny. Still she dragged her weary feet on, and only at the very end of the town fell senseless to the ground.

Once in their earlier wanderings they had made friends with a village schoolmaster, and now, when all hope seemed gone, it was this schoolmaster who brought the travellers into a peaceful haven. For it was he who passed along when little Nell fell fainting to the ground,

and it was he who carried her into a small inn hard by. A day's rest brought some recovery to the child, and in the evening she was able to sit up.

"I have made my fortune since I saw you last," said the schoolmaster. "I have been appointed clerk and schoolmaster to a village a long way from here at five-and-thirty pounds a year."

Then the schoolmaster insisted they must come with him, and make the journey by waggons, and that when they reached the village some occupation should be found by which they could subsist.

They agreed to go, and when the village was reached the efforts of the good schoolmaster procured a post for Nell. Someone was wanted to keep the keys of the church and show it to strangers, and the old clergyman yielded to the schoolmaster's petition.

"But an old church is a dull and gloomy place for one so young as you, my child," said the old clergyman, laying his hand upon her head and smiling sadly, "I would rather see her dancing on the green at nights than have her sitting in the shadow of our mouldering arches."

It was very peaceful in the old church, and the village children soon grew to love little Nell. At last Nell and her grandfather were beyond the need of flight.

But the child's strength was failing, and in the winter came her death. Dear, gentle, patient, noble Nell was dead. The traces of her early cares, her sufferings, and fatigues were gone. She had died with her arms round her grandfather's neck and "God bless you!" on her lips.

The old man never realised that she was dead. "She is asleep," he said. "She will come to-morrow."

And thenceforth every day, and all day long he waited at her grave. And people would hear him whisper, "Lord, let her come to-morrow."

The last time was on a genial day in spring. He did

not return at the usual hour, and they went to seek him, and found him lying dead upon the stone.

They laid by the side of her whom he had loved so well; and in the church where they had often lingered hand in hand the child and the old man slept together.

Our Mutual Friend

I.—The Man from Somewhere

It was at a dinner-party that Mortimer Lightwood, solicitor, at the request of Lady Tippins, told the story of the Man from Somewhere.

"Upon my life," says Mortimer languidly, "I can't fix him with a local habitation; but he comes from the place, the name of which escapes me, where they make the wine.

"The man," Mortimer goes on, "whose name is Harmon, was the only son of a tremendous old rascal, who made his money by dust, as a dust contractor. This venerable parent, displeased with his son, turns him out

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"Our Mutual Friend" was the last long complete novel Dickens wrote, and, like all his books, it first appeared in monthly parts. It was so published in 1864–65. After three numbers had appeared, the author wrote: "I have grown hard to satisfy, and write very slowly. Although I have not been wanting in industry, I have been wanting in imagination." In his "Postscript in Lieu of Preface," the author points out—in answer to those who had disputed the probability of Harmon's will—"that there are hundreds of will cases far more remarkable than that fancied in this book." In this same postscript Dickens also renewed his attack on Poor Law administration, begun in "Oliver Twist." Though "Our Mutual Friend" is not one of the greatest or most famous of Dickens's works, for it is somewhat loosely constructed as a story, and shows signs of laboured composition, it abounds in scenes of real Dickensian character, and is not without touches of the genius which had made its author the foremost novelist of his time, and one of the greatest writers of all ages.

of doors. The boy takes flight, gets aboard ship, turns up on dry land among the Cape wine; small proprietor, farmer, grower—whatever you like to call it. Venerable parent dies. His will is found. It leaves the lowest of a range of dust mountains, with a dwelling-house, to an old servant, who is sole executor. And that's all, except that the son's inheritance is made conditional on his marrying a girl, at the date of the will a child four or five years old, who is now a marriageable young woman. Advertisement and inquiry discovered the son in the Man from Somewhere, and he is now on his way home, after fourteen years' absence, to succeed to a very large fortune, and to take a wife."

Mortimer, being asked what would become of the fortune in the event of the marriage condition not being fulfilled, replies that by a clause in the will it would then go to the old servant above-mentioned, passing over and excluding the son; also, that if the son had not been living, the same old servant would have been sole residuary legatee.

It is just when the ladies are retiring that Mortimer receives a note from the butler.

"This really arrives in an extraordinarily opportune manner," says Mortimer, after reading the paper presented to him. "This is the conclusion of the story of the identical man. Man's drowned!"

The dinner being over, Mortimer Lightwood and his friend Eugene Wrayburn interviewed the boy who had brought the note, and then set out in a cab to the riverside quarter of Wapping.

The cab dismissed, a little winding through some muddy alleys brings then to the bright lamp of a police-station, where they find the night-inspector. He takes a bull's-eye, and Mortimer and Eugene follow him to a cool grot at the end of the yard. They quickly come out again.

"No clue, gentlemen," says the inspector, "as to how

the body came into river. Very often no clue. Steward of ship, in which gentleman came home passenger, had been round to view, and could swear to identity. Likewise could swear to clothes. Inquest to-morrow, and no doubt open verdict."

A stranger who had entered the station with Lightwood and Wrayburn attracts Mr. Inspector's attention.

"Turned you faint, sir?" You expected to identify?"

"It's a horrible sight," says the stranger. "No, I can't identify."

"You missed a friend, you know; or you missed a foe, or you wouldn't have come here, you know. Well, then, ain't it reasonable to ask, who was it?" Thus Mr. Inspector. "At least, you won't object to write down your name and address?"

The stranger took the pen and wrote down, "Mr. Julius Handford, Exchequer Coffee House, Palace Yard, Westminster."

At the coroner's inquest next day, Mr. Mortimer Lightwood watched the proceedings on behalf of the representatives of the deceased; and Mr. Julius Handford having given his right address, had no summons to appear.

Upon the evidence before them, the jury found that Mr. John Harmon had come by his death under suspicious circumstances, though by whose act there was no evidence to show. Within eight-and-forty hours a reward of one hundred pounds was proclaimed by the Home Office, and for a time public interest in the Harmon Murder, as it came to be called, ran high.

II.—The Golden Dustman

Mr. Boffin, a broad, round-shouldered, one-sided old fellow in mourning, dressed in a pea overcoat, and wearing thick leather gaiters, and gloves like a hedger's, came ambling towards the street corner where Silas Wegg sat

at his stall. A few small lots of fruits and sweets, and a choice collection of halfpenny ballads, comprised Mr. Wegg's stock, and assuredly it was the hardest little stall of all the sterile little stalls in London.

"Morning, morning!" said the old fellow.

"Good-morning to *you*, sir!" said Mr. Wegg.

The old fellow paused, and then startled Mr. Wegg with the question, "How did you get your wooden leg?"

"In an accident."

"Do you like it?"

"Well, I haven't got to keep it warm," Mr. Wegg answered desperately.

"Did you ever hear of the name of Boffin? And do you like it?"

"Why, no," said Mr. Wegg, growing restive; "I can't say that I do."

"My name's Boffin," said the old fellow, smiling. "But there's another chance for you. Do you like the name of Nicodemus? Think it over. Nick or Noddy. Noddy Boffin, that's my name."

"It is not, sir," said Mr. Wegg, in a tone of resignation, "a name as I could wish anyone to call *me* by, but there may be persons that would not view it with the same objections. Silas Wegg is my name. I don't know why Silas, and I don't know why Wegg."

"Now, Wegg," said Mr. Boffin, "I came by here one morning and heard you reading through your ballads to a butcher-boy. I thought to myself, 'Here's a literary man *with* a wooden leg, and all print is open to him! And here am I without a wooden leg, and all print is shut to me.'"

"I believe you couldn't show me the piece of English print that I wouldn't be equal to collaring and throwing," Mr. Wegg admitted modestly.

"Now I want some reading, and I must pay a man so much an hour to come and do it for me. Say two

hours a night at twopence-halfpenny. Half-a-crown a week. What do you think of the terms, Wegg?"

"Mr. Boffin, I never did 'aggle, and I never will 'aggle. I meet you at once, free and fair, with—— Done, for double the money!"

From that night Silas Wegg came to read at Boffin's Bower—or Harmony Jail, as the house was formerly called—and he soon learnt that his employer was no other than the inheritor of old Harmon's property, and that he was known as the Golden Dustman.

It was not long after Silas Wegg's appointment that Mr. Boffin was accosted by a strange gentleman, who gave his name as John Rokesmith, and proposed his services as private secretary. Mr. Rokesmith mentioned that he lodged at one Mr. Wilfer's, in Holloway. Mr. Boffin stared.

"Father of Miss Bella Wilfer?"

"My landlord has a daughter named Bella."

"Well, to tell you the truth, I don't know what to say," said Mr. Boffin; "but call at the Bower, though I don't know that I shall ever be in want of a secretary."

So to the Bower came Mr. John Rokesmith, but not before the Boffins had called at the Wilfers' and seen the young lady destined by old Harmon for his son's bride.

"Noddy," said Mrs. Boffin, "I have been thinking early and late of that girl, Bella Wilfer, who was so cruelly disappointed both of her husband and his riches. Don't you think we might do something for her? Have her to live with us? And, Noddy, I tell you what I want —I want society. We have come into a great fortune, and we must act up to it. It's never been acted up to, and consequently no good has come of it."

It was agreed that they should move into a good house in a good neighbourhood, and that a visit should be paid to Mr. Wilfer at once. Mrs. Wilfer received them with a tragic air.

"Mrs. Boffin and me, ma'am," said Mr. Boffin, "are

plain people, and we make this call to say we shall be glad to have the honour and pleasure of your daughter's acquaintance, and that we shall be rejoiced if your daughter will come to consider our house in the light of her home equally with this."

"I am much obliged to you—I am sure," said Miss Bella, coldly shaking her curls, "but I doubt if I have the inclination to go out at all."

"Bella," Mrs. Wilfer admonished her solemnly, "you must conquer this!"

"Yes, do what your ma says, and conquer it, my dear," urged Mrs. Boffin, "because we shall be so glad to have you, and because you are much too pretty to keep yourself shut up."

With that Mrs. Boffin gave her a kiss, which Bella frankly returned; and it was settled that Bella should be sent for as soon as they were ready to receive her.

"By the bye, ma'am," said Mr. Boffin, as he was leaving, "you have a lodger?"

"A gentleman," Mrs. Wilfer answered, "undoubtedly occupies our first floor."

"I may call him our mutual friend," said Mr. Boffin. "What sort of fellow *is* our mutual friend, now? Do you like him?"

"Mr. Rokesmith is very punctual, very quiet—a very eligible inmate."

The Boffins drove away, and Mr. Rokesmith, coming to the Bower, extricated Mr. Boffin from a mass of disordered papers, and gave such satisfaction that his services were accepted, and he took up the secretaryship.

III.—The Golden Dustman Deteriorates

Miss Bella Wilfer was conscious that she was growing mercenary. She admitted as much to her father. There were several other secrets she had to impart beyond her own lack of improvement.

"Mr. Rokesmith has made an offer to me, pa, and I told him I thought it a betrayal of trust on his part, and an affront to me. Mrs. Boffin has herself told me, with her own kind lips, that they wish to see me well married; and that when I marry, with their consent, they will portion me most handsomely. That is another secret. And now there is only one more, and it is very hard to tell it. But Mr. Boffin is being spoilt by prosperity, and is changing for the worse every day. Not to me—he is always the same to me—but to others about him. He grows suspicious, hard, and unjust. If ever a good man were ruined by good fortune, it is my benefactor."

Bella parted from her father, and returned to the Boffins, to find fresh proofs of the deterioration of the Golden Dustman.

"Now, Rokesmith," Mr. Boffin was saying, "it's time to settle about your wages. A man of property like me is bound to consider the market price. If I pay for a sheep, I buy it out and out. Similarly, if I pay for a secretary, I buy *him* out and out. It's convenient to have you at all times ready on the premises."

The secretary bowed and withdrew. Bella's eyes followed him to the door. She felt that Mrs. Boffin was uncomfortable.

"Noddy," said Mrs. Boffin thoughtfully, "haven't you been a little strict with Mr. Rokesmith to-night? Haven't you been just a little not quite like your own old self?"

"Why, old woman, I hope so," said Mr. Boffin cheerfully. "Our old selves wouldn't do here, old lady. Our old selves would be fit for nothing but to be imposed upon. Our old selves weren't people of fortune. Our new selves are. It's a great difference."

Very uncomfortable was Bella that night, and very uneasy was she as the days went by, for Mr. Boffin made a point of hunting up old books that gave the lives of misers, and the more enjoyment he seemed to get out of

this literature, the harder he became to the secretary. Somehow, the worse Mr. Boffin treated his secretary, the more Bella felt drawn to the man whose offer of marriage she had refused. The crisis came one morning when the Golden Dustman's bearing towards Rokesmith was even more arrogant and offensive than it had been before. Mrs. Boffin was seated on a sofa, and Mr. Boffin had Bella on his arm.

"Don't be alarmed, my dear," he said gently. "I'm going to see you righted."

Then he turned to his secretary.

"Now, sir, look at this young lady. How dare you come out of your station to pester this young lady with your impudent addresses? This young lady, who was far above *you*. This young lady was looking about for money, and you had no money."

Bella hung her head, and Mrs. Boffin broke out crying.

"This Rokesmith is a needy young man," Mr. Boffin went on unmoved. "He gets acquainted with my affairs and gets to know that I mean to settle a sum of money upon this young lady."

"I indignantly deny it!" said the secretary quietly. "But our connection being at an end, it matters little what I say."

"I discharge you," Mr. Boffin retorted. "There's your money."

"Mrs. Boffin," said Rokesmith, "for your unvarying kindness I thank you with the warmest gratitude. Miss Wilfer, good-bye."

"Oh, Mr. Rokesmith," said Bella in her tears, "hear one word from me before you go. I am deeply sorry for the reproaches you have borne on my account. Out of the depths of my heart I beg your pardon."

She gave him her hand, and he put it to his lips and said, "God bless you!"

"There was a time when I deserved to be 'righted,' as

Mr. Boffin has done," Bella went on, "but I hope that I shall never deserve it again."

Once more John Rokesmith put her hand to his lips, and then relinquished it, and left the room.

Bella threw her arms round Mrs. Boffin's neck. "He has been most shamefully abused and driven away, and I am the cause of it. I must go home; I am very grateful for all you have done for me, but I can't stay here."

"Now, Bella," said Mr. Boffin, "look before you leap. Go away, and you can never come back. And you mustn't expect that I'm a-going to settle money on you if you leave me like this, because I'm not. Not one brass farthing."

"No power on earth could make me take it now," said Bella haughtily.

Then she broke into sobs over saying good-bye to Mrs. Boffin, said a last word to Mr. Boffin, and ran upstairs. A few minutes later she went out of the house.

"That was well done," said Bella when she was in the street, "and now I'll go and see my dear, darling pa in the city."

IV.—The Runaway Marriage

Bella found her way to her father's office in the city. It was after hours, and the little man was alone, having tea on a small cottage loaf and a pennyworth of milk, for R. Wilfer was but a clerk on a small income. He immediately fetched another loaf and another pennyworth of milk, and then, before she could tell him she had left the Boffins, who should come along but John Rokesmith. And John Rokesmith not only came in, but he caught Bella in his arms, and she was content to leave her head on his breast as if that were her head's chosen and lasting resting place.

"I knew you would come to him, and I followed you," said Rokesmith. "You *are* mine."

"Yes, I am yours if you think me worth taking," Bella responded.

Then Bella's father had to hear what had happened, and said his daughter had done well.

"To think," said Wilfer, looking round the office, "that anything of a tender nature should come off here is what tickles me."

A few weeks later and Bella and her father went out early one morning and took the steamer to Greenwich. And at Greenwich there was John Rokesmith, and presently in a church John and Bella were joined together in wedlock.

They had been married a year, and lived in a little house at Blackheath. John Rokesmith went up to the city every day, and explained that he was "in a China house." From time to time he would ask her, "Would you like to be rich *now*, my darling?" and got for answer, "Dear John, am I not rich?"

But for all that a change came in their affairs. For Mortimer Lightwood, who had met Bella at the Boffins', seeing her walking with her husband, recognised him as Julius Handford; and as Mr. Inspector had never discovered what became of Mr. Julius Handford, he must needs pay Mr. Rokesmith a visit. And then it turned out that John Rokesmith was not only Julius Handford, but John Harmon himself, much to Mr. Inspector's astonishment.

More surprises were to follow, for when John came home next day he told Bella that he had left the China house, and was better off.

"We must have our headquarters in London now, my dear, and there's a house ready for us."

And the house which John and Bella visited next day was none other than the Boffins', and when they arrived, there were Mr. and Mrs. Boffin beaming at them. Mrs. Boffin told Bella that John Rokesmith was John Harmon, and how, remembering him as a small boy, she had guessed it quite early. Then Mrs. Boffin admitted that

John, despairing of winning Bella's heart, and determined that there should be no question of money in the marriage, he was for going away, and that Noddy said he would prove that she loved him. "We was all of us in it, my beauty," Mrs. Boffin concluded, "and when you was married there was we hid up in the church organ by this husband of yours, for he wouldn't let us out with it then, as was first meant. But it was Noddy who said that he would prove you had a true heart of gold. 'If she was to stand up for you when you was slighted,' he said to John, 'and if she was to do that against her own interest, how would that do?' 'Do?' says John, 'it would raise me to the skies.' 'Then,' says my Noddy, 'get ready for the ascent, John, for up you go. Look out for being slighted and oppressed.' And then he began. And how he did begin, didn't he?"

"It looks as if old Harmon's spirit had found rest at last, and as if his money had turned bright again after a long rust in the dark," said Mrs. Boffin to her husband that night.

"Yes, old lady."

The mystery of the Harmon murder is yet to be explained. John Harmon, going on shore with a fellow passenger, who greatly resembled him, was drugged and robbed of his money in a house near the river by this man. But the robber, who had taken Harmon's clothes, was himself robbed and thrown into the water, and Harmon recovered consciousness and made his escape just at the time when the body of his assailant was recovered. In this state of strange excitement he turned up at the police station, and, unwilling to reveal his identity at the moment, passed himself off as Julius Handford.

Pickwick Papers

I.—Mr. Pickwick Engages Sam Weller

Mr. Pickwick's apartments in Goswell Street were of a very neat and comfortable description, peculiarly adapted for a man of his genius and observation, and importance as General Chairman of the world-famed Pickwick Club.

His landlady, Mrs. Bardell, was a comely woman of bustling manners and agreeable appearance, with a natural gift for cooking. Cleanliness and quiet reigned throughout the house, and in it Mr. Pickwick's will was law.

To anyone acquainted with these things and with Mr. Pickwick's admirably regulated mind, his conduct on the morning previous to his setting out for Eatanswill seemed most mysterious and unaccountable. He paced the room, popped his head out of the window, and constantly referred to his watch. It was evident to Mrs. Bardell, who was dusting the apartment, that something of importance was in contemplation.

"Mrs. Bardell," said Mr. Pickwick at last, "your little boy is a very long time gone."

"Why, it's a good long way to the Borough, sir!" remonstrated Mrs. Bardell.

Dickens first became known to the public through the famous "Sketches by Boz," which appeared in the "Monthly Magazine" in December, 1833, the complete series being collected and published in volume form three years later. This was followed by the immortal "Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club" in 1836, which soon placed Dickens in the front rank of English novelists. Frankly humorous as "Pickwick" is, Dickens, in a preface to a later edition, recorded with satisfaction that "legal reforms had pared the claws of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg," that the laws relating to imprisonment for debt had been altered, and the Fleet Prison pulled down.

"Very true; so it is. Mrs. Bardell do you think it's a much greater expense to keep two people than to keep one?"

"La, Mr. Pickwick!" said Mrs. Bardell, colouring, as she fancied she observed a species of matrimonial twinkle in the eyes of her lodger. "La, Mr. Pickwick, what a question!"

"Well, but *do* you?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"That depends," said Mrs. Bardell, "a good deal upon the person, you know, Mr. Pickwick; and whether it's a saving and careful person, sir."

"That's very true," said Mr. Pickwick; "but the person I have in my eye (here he looked very hard at Mrs. Bardell) I think possesses these qualities. To tell you the truth, I have made up my mind. You'll think it very strange now that I never consulted you about this matter till I sent your little boy out this morning, eh?"

Mrs. Bardell had long worshipped Mr. Pickwick at a distance, and now she thought he was going to propose. A deliberate plan, too—sent her little boy to the Borough to get him out of the way! How thoughtful! How considerate!

"It'll save you a good deal of trouble, won't it?" said Mr. Pickwick. "And when I am in town you'll always have somebody to sit with you." Mr. Pickwick smiled placidly.

"I'm sure I ought to be a very happy woman," said Mrs. Bardell, trembling with agitation. "Oh, you kind, good, playful dear!" And, without more ado, she flung her arms round Mr. Pickwick's neck.

"Bless my soul!" cried the astonished Mr. Pickwick. "Mrs. Bardell, my good woman! Dear me, what a situation! Pray consider if anybody should come!"

"Oh, let them come!" exclaimed Mrs. Bardell frantically. "I'll never leave you, dear, kind soul!" And she clung the tighter.

"Mercy upon me," said Mr. Pickwick, struggling;

"I hear somebody coming upstairs! Don't, there's a good creature, don't!" But Mrs. Bardell had fainted in his arms, and before he could gain time to deposit her on a chair, Master Bardell entered the room, followed by Mr. Pickwick's friends Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass.

"What is the matter?" said the three Pickwickians.

"I don't know!" replied Mr. Pickwick; while the ever gallant Mr. Tupman led Mrs. Bardell, who said she was better, downstairs. "I cannot conceive what has been the matter with the woman. I merely told her of my intention of keeping a manservant, when she fell into an extraordinary paroxysm. Very remarkable thing."

"Very," said his three friends.

"There's a man in the passage now," said Mr. Tupman.

"It's the man I've sent for from the Borough," said Mr. Pickwick. "Have the goodness to call him up."

Mr. Samuel Weller forthwith presented himself, having previously deposited his old white hat on the landing outside.

"Ta'nt a wery good 'un to look at," said Sam, "but it's an astonishin' 'un to wear. And afore the brim went it was a wery handsome tile."

"Now, with regard to the matter on which I sent for you," said Mr. Pickwick.

"That's the pint, sir; out vith it, as the father said to the child ven he swallowed a farden."

"We want to know, in the first place," said Mr. Pickwick, "whether you are discontented with your present situation?"

"Afore I answers that 'ere question," replied Mr. Weller, "*I* should like to know whether you're a-goin' to purwide me vith a better."

Mr. Pickwick smiled benevolently as he said: "I have half made up my mind to engage you myself."

"Have you though?" said Sam. "Wages?"

"Twelve pounds a year."

"Clothes?"

"Two suits."

"Work?"

"To attend upon me, and travel about with me and these gentlemen here."

"Take the bill down," said Sam emphatically. "I'm let to a single gentleman, and the terms is agreed upon. If the clothes fit me half as well as the place, they'll do."

II.—Bardell vs. Pickwick

Acting on the advice of Messrs. Dodson & Fogg, solicitors, Mrs. Bardell brought an action for breach of promise of marriage against Mr. Pickwick, and the damages were laid at £1,500. February 14 was the day fixed for the memorable trial.

When Mr. Pickwick and his friends reached the court, and the judge—Mr. Justice Stareleigh—had taken his place, it was found that only ten of the special jury were present, and a greengrocer and a chemist were caught from the common jury to make up the number.

"I beg this court's pardon," said the chemist, "but I hope this court will excuse my attendance. I have no assistant, and I can't afford to hire one."

"Then you ought to be able to afford it," said the judge, a most particularly short man, and so fat that he seemed all face and waistcoat.

"Very well, my lord," replied the chemist, "then there'll be murder before this trial's over, that's all. I've left nobody but an errand-boy in my shop, and I know that he thinks Epsom salts means oxalic acid, and syrup of senna, laudanum; that's all, my lord."

Mr. Pickwick was regarding the chemist with feelings of the deepest horror when Mrs. Bardell, supported by her friend, Mrs. Cluppins, was led into court.

Then Sergeant Buzfuz opened the case for the plain-

tiff, and when he had finished Elizabeth Cluppins was called.

"Do you recollect, Mrs. Cluppins," said Sergeant Buzfuz, "do you recollect being in Mrs. Bardell's back room on one particular morning last July, when she was dusting Pickwick's apartment?"

"Yes, my lord and jury, I do," replied Mrs. Cluppins.

"What were you doing in the back room, ma'am?" inquired the little judge.

"My lord and jury," said Mrs. Cluppins, "I will not deceive you."

"You had better not, ma'am," said the little judge.

"I was there," resumed Mrs. Cluppins, "unbeknown to Mrs. Bardell; I had been out with a little basket, gentlemen, to buy three pounds of red kidney pertaties, which was tuppence ha'penny, when I see Mrs. Bardell's street-door on the jar."

"On the what?" exclaimed the little judge.

"Partly open, my lord."

"She *said* on the jar," said the little judge, with a cunning look.

"I walked in, gentlemen, just to say good mornin', and went in a permiscuous manner upstairs, and into the back room. There was a sound of voices in the front room, very loud, and forced themselves upon my ear."

Mrs. Cluppins then related the conversation we have already heard between Mr. Pickwick and Mrs. Bardell.

The next witness was Mr. Winkle, and after him came Mr. Tupman, and Mr. Snodgrass, all of whom appeared on subpœna by the plaintiff's lawyers.

Sergeant Buzfuz then rose and said, with considerable importance, "Call Samuel Weller."

It was quite unnecessary to call him, for Samuel Weller stepped briskly into the box the instant his name was pronounced.

"What's your name, sir?" inquired the judge.

"Sam Weller, my lord."

"Do you spell it with a 'V' or a 'W'?" inquired the judge.

"That depends upon the taste and fancy of the speller, my lord," replied Sam, "but I spells it with a 'V.'"

Here a voice in the gallery exclaimed aloud, "Quite right, too, Samuel; quite right. Put it down a we, my lord, put it down a we."

"Who is that that dares to address the court?" said the little judge, looking up.

"I raythe suspect it was my father, my lord," replied Sam.

"Do you see him here now?" said the judge.

"No, I don't my lord," replied Sam, staring right up in the roof of the court.

"If you could have pointed him out, I would have committed him instantly," said the judge.

Sam bowed his acknowledgments.

"Now, Mr. Weller," said Sergeant Buzfuz, "I believe you are in the service of Mr. Pickwick; speak up, if you please."

"I mean to speak up, sir," replied Sam. "I am in the service o' that 'ere gen'l'man, and a wery good service it is."

"Little to do, and plenty to get, I suppose?" said Sergeant Buzfuz.

"Oh, quite enough to get, sir, as the soldier said ven they ordered him three hundred and fifty lashes," replied Sam.

"You must not tell us what the soldier said," interposed the judge, "it's not evidence."

"Wery good, my lord."

"Now, Mr. Weller," said Sergeant Buzfuz, "do you recollect anything particular happening on the morning when you were first engaged by the defendant?"

"Yes, I do, sir. I had a reg'lar new fit-out o' clothes

that mornin', and that was a wery partickler and uncommon circumstance vith me in those days."

"Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Weller, that you saw nothing of the fainting of the plaintiff in the arms of the defendant?"

"Certainly not; I was in the passage till they called me up, and then the old lady wasn't there."

"Have you a pair of eyes, Mr. Weller?"

"Yes, that's just it," replied Sam. "If they was a pair o' patent double million magnifyin' gas microscopes of hextra power, p'raps I might be able to see through a flight o' stairs and a deal door, but bein' only eyes, you see, my wision's limited."

"Do you remember going up to Mrs. Bardell's house one night last November? I suppose you went to have a little talk about this trial, eh, Mr. Weller?" said Sergeant Buzfuz, looking knowingly at the jury.

"I went up to pay the rent," said Sam; "but the ladies gets into a wery great state of admiration at the honourable conduct o' Mr. Dodson and Fogg, and said what a wery gen'rous thing it was o' them to have taken up the case on spec., and to have charged nothin' at all for costs, unless they got 'em out of Mr. Pickwick."

At this very unexpected reply the spectators tittered, and Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz said curtly, "Stand down, sir."

Sergeant Snubbin then addressed the jury on behalf of the defendant, and after that Mr. Justice Stareleigh summed up.

At the end of a quarter of an hour the jury brought in a verdict for the plaintiff with £750 damages.

In the court-room Mr. Pickwick encountered Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, rubbing their hands with satisfaction.

"Not one farthing of costs or damages do you ever get out of me, if I spend the rest of my existence in a debtor's prison," said Mr. Pickwick.

"We shall see about that," said Mr. Fogg grinning.

Outside Mr. Pickwick and his friends made their way to a hackney coach, and Sam Weller was just preparing to jump upon the box when his father stood before him. The old gentleman shook his head gravely and said in warning accents, "I know'd what 'ud come o' this here mode o' doin' bisness. Oh, Sammy, Sammy, vy worn't there a alleybi?"

"But surely, my dear sir," said Perker to his client the following morning, "you don't really mean, seriously now, that you won't pay these costs and damages?"

"Not one halfpenny," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Hooroar for the principle, as the money-lender said ven he vouldn't renew the bill," observed Mr. Samuel Weller.

III.—In the Fleet Prison

Two months later Mr. Pickwick was arrested for the non-payment of costs and damages and taken to the Fleet Prison. And so, for the first time in his life, Mr. Pickwick found himself within the walls of a debtor's prison.

"Where am I to sleep to-night?" inquired Mr. Pickwick of the turnkey, and after some discussion it was discovered there was a bed to let.

"It ain't a large 'un, but it's an out-and-outer to sleep in. This way, sir," said the turnkey.

Mr. Pickwick, accompanied by Sam Weller, followed his guide up a staircase and along a gallery; at the end of this was an apartment containing eight or nine iron bedsteads.

Mr. Pickwick felt very low-spirited and uncomfortable when he was left alone, and he went slowly to bed. He was awakened from his slumbers by the noise of his bed-fellows, one of whom, wearing grey cotton stockings, was performing a hornpipe; while another, evidently very drunk, was warbling as much as he could

recollect of a comic song; the third, a man with thick, bushy whiskers, was applauding both performers.

"My name is Smangle, sir," said the man with the whiskers to Mr. Pickwick.

"Mine is Mivins," said the man in the stockings.

"Well; but come," said Mr. Smangle, after assuring Mr. Pickwick a great many times that he entertained a very high respect for the feelings of a gentleman, "this is but dry work. Let's rinse our mouths with a drop of burnt sherry; the last-comer shall stand it, Mivins shall fetch it, and I'll help to drink it. That's a fair and gentleman-like division of labour, anyhow."

Mr. Pickwick, unwilling to hazard a quarrel, gladly assented to the proposition.

When Mr. Pickwick opened his eyes next morning, the first object upon which they rested was Samuel Weller, seated upon a small black portmanteau.

He soon learnt that money was in the Fleet just what money was out of it; and that if he wished it he could have a room to himself, if he was willing to pay for it.

"There's a capital room up in the coffee-room flight that belongs to a Chancery prisoner," said the turnkey. "It'll stand you in a pound a week. Lord! Why didn't you say at first that you was willing to come down handsome?"

The matter was soon arranged, and in a short time the room was furnished.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, when his servant had done his best to make the apartment comfortable, and was now inspecting the arrangements, "I have felt from the first that this is not the place to bring a young man to."

"Nor an old 'un neither, sir."

"You're quite right, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick. "But old men may come here through their own heedlessness and unsuspicion. Do you understand me, Sam?"

"Vell, sir," rejoined Sam, after a pause, "I think

I see your drift, and it's my 'pinion that you're a-comin' it a great deal too strong, as the mail-coachman said to the snowstorm ven it overtook him."

"For the time that I remain here," said Mr. Pickwick, "you must leave me, Sam."

"Now, I tell you vot it is," said Mr. Weller, in a grave and solemn voice. "This here sort o' thing won't do at all, so don't let's hear no more about it."

"I am serious, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"You air, air you, sir?" inquired Mr. Weller. "Wery good, sir. Then so am I."

With that Mr. Weller fixed his hat on his head with great precision and left the room. Having found his father, Sam explained to the elder Mr. Weller that Mr. Pickwick must not be left alone in the Fleet.

"Vy, they'll eat him up alive, Sammy!" exclaimed the elder Mr. Weller. "Stop there by himself, poor creetur, without nobody to take his part! It can't be done, Samivel, it can't be done!"

"O' course it can't," asserted Sam. "Well, then, I tell you wot it is. I'll trouble you for the loan of five-and-twenty pound. P'raps you may ask for it five minits artervards, p'raps I may say I von't pay, and cut up rough. You von't think o' arrestin' your own son for the money, and sendin' him off to the Fleet, will you, you unnat'ral wagabone?"

The elder Mr. Weller, having grasped the idea, laughed till he was purple.

In the course of the day Sam was duly arrested at the suit of his father, and Sam, having been formally delivered into the warden's custody, passed at once into the prison, and went straight to his master's room.

"I'm a pris'ner, sir," said Sam. "I was arrested this here wery arternoon for debt, and the man as put me in 'ull never let me out till you go yourself."

"Bless my heart and soul!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick. "What do you mean?"

"Wot I say, sir," rejoined Sam. "If it's forty year to come, I shall be a pris'ner, and I'm very glad on it. He's a malicious, bad-disposed, vorldly-minded, windictive creetur wot's put me in, with a hard heart as there ain't no soft'nin', as the wirtuous clergyman remarked of the old gen'l'm'n with a dropsy, ven he said that upon the whole he thought he'd rather leave his property to his vife than build a chapel with it."

In vain Mr. Pickwick remonstrated.

"I takes my determination on principle, sir," remarked Sam, "and you takes yours on the same ground; vich puts me in mind o' the man as killed hisself on principle."

IV.—Mr. Pickwick Leaves the Fleet

Those enterprising lawyers, Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, having obtained no money from Mr. Pickwick, proceeded in July to arrest Mrs. Bardell, who, as a matter of form, had given them a *cognovit* for the amount of their costs.

Mr. Pickwick was taking his evening walk in the grounds of the Fleet when Mrs. Bardell was brought in, and Sam Weller, seeing the lady, took off his hat in mock reverence. Mr. Pickwick turned indignantly away.

"Don't bother the woman," said the turnkey to Weller; "she's just come in."

"A pris'ner!" said Sam. "Who's the plaintives? What for? Speak up, old feller!"

"Dodson and Fogg," replied the man.

"Here, Job, Job!" shouted Sam, dashing into the passage, and calling for a man who went errands for the prisoners. "Run to Mr. Perker's, Job; I want him directly. I see some good in this. Here's a game! Hooray!"

Mr. Perker was in Mr. Pickwick's room betimes next morning

"Well, now, my dear sir," said Perker, "the first question I have to ask is whether this woman is to remain here? It rests solely and wholly and entirely with you."

"With me!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick.

"Nobody but you can rescue her from this den of wretchedness, to which no man, and still more no woman, should ever be consigned if I had my will," resumed Mr. Perker. "I have seen the woman this morning. By paying the costs, you can obtain a full release and discharge from the damages; and, further, a voluntary statement, under her hand, that this business was from the very first fomented and encouraged by these men, Dodson and Fogg. She entreats me to intercede with you, and implores your pardon."

Before Mr. Pickwick could reply, there was a low murmuring of voices outside, and a hesitating knock at the door; and Mr. Winkle, Mr. Tupman, and Mr. Snodgrass entering most opportunely, at last, by their united pleadings, Mr. Pickwick was fairly argued out of his resolutions. At three o'clock that afternoon Mr. Pickwick took a last look at his little room, and made his way as well as he could through the throng of debtors who pressed eagerly forward to shake him by the hand, until he reached the lodge steps. He turned here to look about him, and his eye brightened as he did so. In all the crowd of wan, emaciated faces, he saw not one which was not the happier for his sympathy and charity.

As for Sam Weller, having dispatched Job Trotter to procure his formal discharge, his next proceeding was to invest his whole stock of ready money in the purchase of five-and-twenty gallons of mild porter, which he himself dispensed on the racket-ground to everybody who would partake of it. This done, he hurra'd in divers parts of the building until he lost his voice, and then quietly relapsed into his usual collected and philosophical condition, and followed his master out of the prison.

Tale of Two Cities

I.—Recalled to Life

A LARGE cask of wine had been dropped and broken in the street. All the people within reach had suspended their business, or their idleness, to run to the spot and drink the wine. Some kneeled down, made scoops of their two hands joined, and tried to sip before the wine had all run out between their fingers. Others dipped in the puddles with little mugs of mutilated earthenware, or even with handkerchiefs from women's heads. A shrill sound of laughter resounded in the street while this wine game lasted.

The wine was red wine, and had stained the ground of the narrow street in the suburb of Saint Antoine, in Paris, where it was spilled. It had stained many hands, too, and many faces, and many naked feet, and many wooden shoes. One tall joker so besmirched scrawled upon a wall, with his finger dipped in muddy wine lees, "Blood!"

And now that the cloud settled on Saint Antoine, which a momentary gleam had driven from his sacred

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The French Revolution has been the subject of more books than any secular event that ever occurred, and two books by English writers have brought the passion, the cruelty, and the horror of it for all time within the shuddering comprehension of English-speaking people. One is a history that is more than a history; the other a tale that is more than a tale. Dickens, no doubt, owed much of his inspiration to Carlyle's tremendous prose epic. But the genius that depicted a moving and tragic story upon the red background of the Terror was Dickens's own, and the "Tale of Two Cities" was final proof that its author could handle a great theme in a manner that was worthy of its greatness. The work was one of the novelist's later writings—it was published in 1859—and is in many respects distinct from all his others. It stands by itself among Dickens's masterpieces, in sombre and splendid loneliness—a detached glory to its author, and to his country's literature.

countenance, the darkness of it was heavy—cold, dirt, sickness, ignorance, and want were the lords in waiting on the saintly presence. The children had ancient faces and grave voices; and upon them, and upon the grown faces, and ploughed into every furrow of age, and coming up afresh, was the sign—Hunger.

The master of the wine-shop outside of which the cask had been broken turned back to his shop when the struggle for the wine was ended. Monsieur Defarge was a dark, bull-necked man, good-humoured-looking on the whole, but implacable-looking, too. Three men who had been drinking at the counter paid for their wine, and left. An elderly gentleman, who had been sitting in a corner with a young lady, advanced, introduced himself as Mr. Jarvis Lorry, of Tellson's Bank, London, and begged the favour of a word.

The conference was very short, but very decided. It had not lasted a minute, when Monsieur Defarge nodded and went out, followed by Mr. Lorry and the young lady.

He led them through a stinking little black courtyard, and up a staircase to a dim garret, where a white-haired man sat on a low bench, stooping and very busy, making shoes.

"You are still hard at work, I see," said Monsieur Defarge.

A pair of haggard eyes looked at the questioner, and a very faint voice replied, "Yes, I am working."

"Here is a visitor. Show him that shoe and tell him the maker's name."

There was a long pause, and the shoemaker asked, "What did you say?"

Defarge repeated his words.

"It is a lady's shoe," answered the shoemaker.

"And the maker's name?"

"One Hundred and Five, North Tower."

"Dr. Manette," said Mr. Lorry, looking steadfastly at

him, "do you remember nothing of me? Do you remember nothing of Defarge—your old servant?"

As the Bastille captive of many years gazed at them, marks of intelligence forced themselves through the mist that had fallen on him. They were fainter; they were gone, but they had been there. The young lady moved forward, with tears streaming from her eyes, and kissed him. He took up her golden hair, and looked at it; then drew from his breast a folded rag, and opened it carefully. It contained a little quantity of hair. He took the girl's hair into his hand again.

"It is the same! How can it be? She had a fear of my going that night. *Was it you?*" He turned upon her with frightful suddenness. But his vigour swiftly died out, and he gloomily shook his head. "No, no, no! It can't be!"

She fell on her knees and clasped his neck.

"If you hear in my voice any resemblance to a voice that was once sweet music to your ears, weep for it—weep for it! Thank God!" she cried. "I feel his sacred tears upon my face! Leave us here," she said. And, as the darkness closed in, they left father and daughter together.

They came back at night. A coach stood outside the courtyard, and the lately released prisoner, in scared, blank wonder, began the journey that was to end in England and rest.

II.—The Jackal

In the dimly-lighted passages of the Old Bailey, Dr. Manette, his daughter, and Mr. Lorry stood by Mr. Charles Darnay—just acquitted on a charge of high treason—congratulating him on his escape from death.

It was not difficult to recognise in Dr. Manette, intellectual of face and upright in bearing, the shoemaker of the garret in Paris. He and his daughter had been unwilling witnesses for the prosecution, called to give evidence that

might be distorted into corroboration of a paid spy's falsehoods as to Darnay's dealings with the French king.

Darnay kissed Lucie Manette's hand fervently and gratefully, and warmly thanked his counsel, Mr. Stryver. As he watched them go, a person who had been leaning against the wall stepped up to him. It was Mr. Carton, a barrister, who had sat throughout the trial with his whole attention seemingly concentrated upon the ceiling of the court. Everybody had been struck with the extraordinary resemblance, cleverly used by the defending counsel to confound a witness, between Mr. Carton and Mr. Darnay. Mr. Carton was shabbily dressed, and did not appear to be quite sober.

"This must be a strange sight to you," said Carton, with a laugh.

"I hardly seem yet," returned Darnay, "to belong to this world again."

"Then why the devil don't you dine?"

He led him to a tavern, where Darnay recruited his strength with a good, plain dinner. Carton drank, but ate nothing.

"Now your dinner is done," Carton presently said, "why don't you give your toast?"

"What toast?"

"Why, it's on the tip of your tongue."

"Miss Manette, then!"

Carton drank the toast, and flung his glass over his shoulder against the wall, where it shivered in pieces.

After Darnay had gone, Carton drank and slept till ten o'clock, and then walked to the chambers of Mr. Stryver. Mr. Stryver was a glib man, and an unscrupulous, and a bold, and was fast shouldering his way to a lucrative practice; but it had been noted that he had not the striking and necessary faculty of extracting evidence from a heap of statements. A remarkable improvement, however, came upon him as to this. Sydney Carton, idlest and most unpromising of men, was his great ally.

What the two drank together would have floated a king's ship.

Stryver never had a case in hand but what Carton was there, with his hands in his pockets, staring at the ceiling. At last it began to get about that, although Sydney Carton would never be a lion, he was an amazingly good jackal, and that he rendered service to Stryver in that humble capacity. Folding wet towels on his head in a manner hideous to behold, the jackal began the "boiling down" of cases, while Stryver reclined before the fire. Each had bottles and glasses ready to his hand. The work was not done until the clocks were striking three.

Climbing to a high chamber in a well of houses, Carton threw himself down in his clothes on a neglected bed. Sadly, sadly the sun rose. It rose upon no sadder sight than the man of good abilities and good emotions, incapable of his own help and his own happiness, sensible of the blight upon him, and resigning himself to let it eat him away.

III.—The Loadstone Rock

"Dear Dr. Manette," said Charles Darnay, "I love your daughter fondly, devotedly. If ever there were love in the world, I love her!"

Dr. Manette turned towards him in his chair, but did not look at him or raise his eyes.

"Have you spoken to Lucie?" he asked.

"No."

The doctor looked up; a struggle was evidently in his face—a struggle with that look he still sometimes wore, with a tendency in it to dark doubt and dread.

"If Lucie should ever tell me," he said, "that you are essential to her perfect happiness, I will give her to you."

"Your confidence in me," answered Darnay, relieved, "ought to be returned with full confidence on my part. I am, as you know, like yourself, a voluntary exile from

France. The name I bear at present is not my own. I wish to tell you what that is, and why I am in England."

"Stop!"

The doctor laid his two hands on Darnay's lips.

"Tell me when I ask you, not now. Go! God bless you!"

On a day shortly before the marriage, while Lucie was sitting at her work alone, Sydney Carton entered.

"I fear you are not well, Mr. Carton," she said, looking up at him.

"No; but the life I lead is not conducive to health."

"Is it not—forgive me—a pity to live no better life?"

"It is too late for that." He covered her eyes with his hand. "Will you hear me?" he continued. "Since I have known you, I have been troubled by a remorse that I thought would never reproach me again. A dream, all a dream, that ends in nothing; but let me carry through the rest of my misdirected life the remembrance that I opened my heart to you, last of all the world."

"Mr. Carton," she answered, after an agitated pause, "I promise to respect your secret."

"God bless you! My last application is this, that you will believe that for you, and for any dear to you, I would do anything. Oh, Miss Manette, think now and then that there is a man who would give his life to keep a life you love beside you!"

He said "farewell!" and left her.

A wonderful corner for echoes was the quiet street-corner near Soho Square, where Dr. Manette lived with his daughter and her husband. But Lucie heard in the echoes none but friendly and soothing sounds. Her husband's step was strong and prosperous among them; her father's firm and equal. The time came when a little Lucie lay on her bosom. But there were other echoes that rumbled menacingly in the distance, with a sound as of a great storm in France, with a dreadful sea rising.

It was August of the year 1792. Charles Darnay talked in a low voice with Mr. Lorry in Tellson's Bank. The bank had a branch in Paris, and the London establishment was the headquarters of the aristocratic emigrants who had fled from France.

"And do you really go to Paris to-night?" asked Darnay.

"I do. You can have no conception of the peril in which our books and papers over yonder are involved, and the getting them out of harm's way is in the power of scarcely anyone but myself."

As Mr. Lorry spoke a letter was laid before him. Darnay saw the direction—it was to himself. "To Monsieur heretofore the Marquis St. Evrémonde." Horrified at the oppression and cruelty of his family towards the people, Darnay had left his native country and had never used the title that had, some years before, fallen to him by inheritance. He had told his secret to Dr. Manette on the wedding morning, and to none other.

"I know the man," he said.

"Will you take charge of the letter and deliver it?" asked Mr. Lorry.

"I will."

When alone, Darnay opened the letter. It was from the steward of his French estate. The man had been charged with acting for an emigrant against the people. It was in vain he had urged that by the marquis's instructions he had acted for the people—had remitted all rents and imposts. The only response was that he had acted for an emigrant. Nothing but the marquis's personal testimony could save him from execution.

Could he resist his old servant's appeal? He knew the peril of it, but his honour was at stake; he must go. That evening he wrote two letters explaining his purpose, one to Lucie, one to the doctor. On the next night he went out, pretending he would be back by-and-by. The two letters he left with the trusty porter to be de-

livered before midnight; and, with a heavy heart, leaving all that was dear on earth behind him, he journeyed on—drawn, like the mariner in the old story, to the Loadstone Rock.

IV.—The Track of a Storm

In the buildings of Tellson's Bank in Paris, Mr. Lorry sat by a wood fire (it was early September, but the blighted year was prematurely cold), and on his honest face there was a deeper shade than the pendant lamp could throw—a shade of horror. By him sat Dr. Manette; Lucie and her child were in an inner room. They had hastened after Darnay to Paris. Dr. Manette knew that as a Bastille prisoner he bore a charmed life in revolutionary France, and that if Darnay was in danger he could help him. Darnay was indeed in danger. He had been arrested as an aristocrat and an enemy of the Republic.

From the streets there came the usual night hum of the city, with now and then an indescribable ring in it, weird and unearthly, as if some unwonted sounds of a terrible nature were going up to Heaven.

A loud noise of feet and voices came pouring into the courtyard. Mr. Lorry put his hand on the doctor's arm, and they looked out.

A throng of men and women crowded round a grindstone. Turning madly at its double handle were two men, whose faces were more horrible and cruel than the visages of the wildest savages. The eye could not detect one creature in the surrounding group free from the smear of blood. Shouldering one another to get next at the sharpening-stone were men with the stain all over their limbs and bodies; hatchets, knives, bayonets, swords, all were red with it.

"They are murdering the prisoners," whispered Mr. Lorry.

Dr. Manette hastened out of the room, and down into the courtyard. There was a pause, a murmur, and the sound of his voice. Then Mr. Lorry saw him, surrounded by all, hurried out with cries of "Live the Bastille prisoner! Help for the Bastille prisoner's kindred in La Force!"

It was long ere he returned. He had presented himself at the prison before the self-appointed tribunal that was consigning the prisoners to massacre, and had announced himself as a victim of the Bastille. One member of the tribunal had identified him; the member was Defarge. He had pleaded hard for his son-in-law's life, and had been informed that the prisoner must remain in custody; but should, for the doctor's sake, be held in safe custody.

For fifteen months Charles Darnay remained in prison. During all that time Lucie was never sure but that her husband's head would be struck off next day. When at length arraigned as an emigrant whose life was forfeit to the Republic, he pleaded that he had come back to save a citizen's life. That night he sat by the fire with his family, a free man. Lucie at last was at ease.

"What is that?" she cried suddenly.

There was a knock at the door; four armed men in red caps entered the room.

"Evrémonde," said the first, "you are again the prisoner of the Republic!"

"Why?" he asked, with his wife and child clinging to him.

"You will know to-morrow."

"One word," entreated the doctor, "who has denounced him?"

"The Citizen Defarge, and another."

"What other?"

"Citizen," said the man, with a strange look, "you will be answered to-morrow."

V.—Condemned

The news that Darnay had been again arrested was brought to Mr. Lorry later in the evening, and the man who brought it was Sydney Carton. He had come to Paris, he said, on business; his business was now completed, he was about to return, and he had obtained his leave to pass.

"Darnay," he said, "cannot escape condemnation this time."

"I fear not," answered Mr. Lorry.

"I have found," continued Carton, "that the Old Bailey spy who charged Darnay with high treason years ago is now in the service of the Republic and is a turnkey at the prison of the Conciergerie where Darnay is confined. By threatening to denounce him as a spy of Pitt, I have secured that I shall gain access to Darnay in the prison if the trial should go against him."

"But access to him," said Mr. Lorry, "will not save him."

"I never said it would."

Mr. Lorry looked at him mystified, and once more noted his strange resemblance to the man whose fate was to be decided on the morrow.

Carton stood next day in an obscure corner among the crowd when Charles Evrémonde, called Darnay, appeared again before the judges.

"Who denounces the accused?" asked the president.

"Ernest Defarge, wine-vendor."

"Good."

"Alexandre Manette, physician."

"President," cried the doctor, pale and trembling, "I indignantly protest to you."

"Citizen Manette, be silent! Call Citizen Defarge."

Rapidly Defarge told his story. He had been among the leaders in the taking of the Bastille. When the

citadel had fallen, he had gone to the cell One Hundred and Five, North Tower, and had searched it. In a hole in the chimney he had found a paper in the handwriting of Dr. Manette.

"Let it be read," said the president.

In this paper Dr. Manette had written the history of his imprisonment. In the year 1757 he had been taken secretly by two nobles to visit two poor people who were on the point of death. One was a woman whom one of the nobles had forcibly carried off from her husband; the other, her brother, whom the seducer had mortally wounded. The doctor had come too late; both the woman and her brother died. The doctor refused a fee, and, to relieve his mind, wrote privately to the government stating the circumstances of the crime. One night he was called out of his home on a false pretext, and taken to the Bastille.

The nobles were the Marquis de St. Evrémonde and his brother; and the Marquis was the father of Charles Darnay. A terrible sound arose in the court when the reading was done. The voting of the jury was unanimous, and at every vote there was a roar. Death in twenty-four hours!

That night Carton again came to Mr. Lorry. Between the two men, as they spoke, a figure on a chair rocked itself to and fro, moaning. It was Dr. Manette.

"He and Lucie and her child must leave Paris to-morrow," said Carton. "They are in danger of being denounced. It is a capital crime to mourn for, or sympathise with, a victim of the guillotine. Be ready to start at two o'clock to-morrow afternoon. See them into their seats; take your own seat. The moment I come to you, take me in, and drive away.

"It shall be done."

Carton turned to the couch where Lucie lay unconscious, prostrated with utter grief.

He bent down, touched her face with his lips, and

murmured some words. Little Lucie told them afterwards that she heard him say, "A life you love."

VI.—The Guillotine

In the black prison of the Conciergerie, the doomed of the day awaited their fate. Fifty-two persons were to roll that afternoon on the life-tide of the city to the boundless, everlasting sea.

The hours went on as Darnay walked to and fro in his cell, and the clocks struck the numbers he would never hear again. The final hour, he knew, was three, and he expected to be summoned at two. The clocks struck one. "There is but another now," he thought.

He heard footsteps. The door was opened, and there stood before him, quiet, intent, and smiling, Sydney Carton.

"Darnay," he said, "I bring you a request from your wife."

"What is it?"

"There is no time—you must comply. Take off your boots and coat, and put on mine."

"Carton, there is no escaping from this place. It is madness."

"Do I ask you to escape?" said Carton, forcing the changes upon him.

"Now sit at the table and write what I dictate."

"To whom do I address it?"

"To no one."

"If you remember," said Carton, dictating, "the words that passed between us long ago, you will comprehend this when you see it. I am thankful that the time has come when I can prove them." Carton's hand was withdrawn from his breast, and slowly and softly moved down the writer's face. For a few seconds Darnay struggled faintly, Carton's hand held firmly at his nostrils; then he fell senseless to the ground.

Carton called quietly to the turnkey, who looked in and went again as Carton was putting the paper in Darnay's breast. He came back with two men. They raised the unconscious figure and carried it away.

The door closed, and Carton was left alone. Straining his powers of listening to the utmost, he listened for any sound that might denote suspicion or alarm. There was none. Presently his door opened, and a gaoler looked in, merely saying: "Follow me," whereupon Carton followed him into a dark room. As he stood by the wall in a dim corner, a young woman, with a slight, girlish figure, came to speak to him.

"Citizen Evrémonde," she said, "I am a poor little seamstress, who was with you in La Force."

He murmured an answer.

"I heard you were released."

"I was, and was taken again and condemned."

"If I may ride with you, will you let me hold your hand?"

As the patient eyes were lifted to his face, he saw a sudden doubt in them.

"Are you dying for him?" she whispered. "Oh, you will let me hold your hand?"

"Hush! Yes, my poor sister, to the last."

That afternoon a coach going out of Paris drove up to the Barrier. "Papers!" demanded the guard. The papers are handed out and read.

"Alexandre Manette, Lucie Manette, her child. Jarvis Lorry, banker, English. Sydney Carton, advocate, English. Which is he?"

He lies here, in a corner, apparently in a swoon. He is in bad health.

"Behold your papers, countersigned."

"One can depart, citizen?"

"One can depart."

The ministers of Sainte Guillotin are robed and ready. Crash!—and the women who sit with their knit-

ung in front of the guillotine count one. Crash!—and the women count two.

The supposed Evrémonde descends with the seamstress from the tumbril, and joins the fast-thinning throng of victims before the crashing engine that constantly whirrs up and falls. The spare hand does not tremble as he grasps it. She goes next before him—is gone. The knitting women count twenty-two.

The murmuring of many voices, the pressing on of many footsteps in the outskirts of the crowd, so that it swells forward like one great heave of water, all flashes away. Twenty-three.

They said of him about the city that night that it was the peacefullest man's face ever beheld there. Had he given utterance to his thoughts at the foot of the scaffold, they would have been these:

"I see the lives for which I lay down my life, peaceful, useful, prosperous, and happy in that England which I shall see no more. I see her with a child upon her bosom, who bears my name. I see that I hold a sanctuary in their hearts, and in the hearts of their descendants, generations hence.

"It is a far, far better thing that I do than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

Coningsby

I.—The Hero of Eton

CONINGSBY was the orphan child of the younger of the two sons of Lord Monmouth. It was a family famous for its hatreds. The elder son hated his father, and lived at Naples, maintaining no connection either with his parent or his native country. On the other hand, Lord Monmouth hated his younger son, who had married against his consent a woman to whom that son was devoted. Persecuted by his father, he died abroad, and his widow returned to England. Not having a relation, and scarcely an acquaintance, in the world, she made an appeal to her husband's father, the wealthiest noble

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Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, was not only a great figure in English politics in the nineteenth century; he was also a novelist of brilliant powers. Born in London on December 21, 1804, the son of Isaac D'Israeli, the future Prime Minister of England was first articled to a solicitor; but he quickly turned from this to politics. Disraeli was leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons in 1847; he was twice Prime Minister. In 1876 he was created Earl of Beaconsfield. Disraeli's novels—especially the famous trilogy of "Coningsby," 1844, "Sybil," 1845, and "Tancred," 1846—are remarkable chiefly for the view they give of contemporary political life, and for the definite political philosophy of their author. Neither the earlier novels—"Vivian Grey," 1826, "Contarini Fleming," "Alroy," 1832, "Henrietta Temple" and "Venetia," 1837—nor the later ones—"Lothair," 1870, and "Endymion," 1874—are to be ranked with "Coningsby" and "Sybil." Many characters in "Coningsby" are well-known men. Lord Monmouth is Lord Hertford, whom Thackeray depicted as the Marquess of Steyne, Rigby is John Wilson Croker, Oswald Millbank is Mr. Gladstone, Lord H. Sydney is Lord John Manners, Sidonia is Baron Alfred de Rothschild, and Coningsby is Lord Lyttelton. Lord Beaconsfield died in London on April 19, 1881.

in England, and a man who was often prodigal, and occasionally generous, who respected law, and despised opinion. Lord Monmouth decided that, provided she gave up her child, and permanently resided in one of the remotest counties, he would make her a yearly allowance of three hundred pounds. Necessity made the victim yield; and three years later, Mrs. Coningsby died, the same day that her father-in-law was made a marquess.

Coningsby was then not more than nine years of age; and when he attained his twelfth year an order was received from Lord Monmouth, who was at Rome, that he should go at once to Eton.

Coningsby had never seen his grandfather. It was Mr. Rigby who made arrangements for his education. This Mr. Rigby was the manager of Lord Monmouth's parliamentary influence and the auditor of his vast estates. He was a member for one of Lord Monmouth's boroughs, and, in fact, a great personage. Lord Monmouth had bought him, and it was a good purchase.

In the spring of 1832, when the country was in the throes of agitation over the Reform Bill, Lord Monmouth returned to England, accompanied by the Prince and Princess Colonna and the Princess Lucretia, the prince's daughter by his first wife. Coningsby was summoned from Eton to Monmouth House, and returned to school in the full favour of the marquess.

Coningsby was the hero of Eton; everybody was proud of him, talked of him, quoted him, imitated him. But the ties of friendship bound Coningsby to Henry Sydney and Oswald Millbank above all companions. Lord Henry Sydney was the son of a duke, and Millbank was the son of one of the wealthiest manufacturers in Lancashire. Once, on the river, Coningsby saved Millbank's life; and this was the beginning of a close and ardent friendship.

Coningsby liked very much to talk politics with Millbank. He heard things from Millbank which were new to him. Politics had, as yet, appeared to him a struggle whether the country was to be governed by Whig nobles or Tory nobles; and Coningsby, a high Tory as he supposed himself to be, thought it very unfortunate that he should probably have to enter life with his friends out of power and his family boroughs destroyed. But, in conversing with Millbank, he heard for the first time of influential classes in the country who were not noble, and were yet determined to acquire power.

Generally, at that time, among the upper boys at Eton there was a reigning inclination for political discussion, and a feeling in favour of "Conservative principles." A year later, and in 1836, gradually the inquiry fell upon attentive ears as to what these Conservative principles were. Before Coningsby and his friends left Eton—Coningsby for Cambridge, and Millbank for Oxford—they were resolved to contend for political faith rather than for mere partisan success or personal ambition.

II.—A Portrait of a Lady

On his way to Coningsby Castle, in Lancashire, where the Marquess of Monmouth was living in state—feasting the county, patronising the borough, and diffusing confidence in the Conservative party in order that the electors of Dartford might return his man, Mr. Rigby, once more for parliament—our hero halted for the night at Manchester. In the coffee-room at the hotel a stranger, loud in praise of the commercial enterprise of the neighbourhood, advised Coningsby, if he wanted to see something tip-top in the way of cotton works, to visit Millbank of Millbank's; and thus it came about that Coningsby first met Edith Millbank. Oswald was abroad; and Mr. Millbank, when he heard the name of

his visitor, was only distressed that the sudden arrival left no time for adequate welcome.

"My visit to Manchester, which led to this, was quite accidental," said Coningsby. "I am bound for the other division of the county, to pay a visit to my grandfather, Lord Monmouth, but an irresistible desire came over me during my journey to view this famous district of industry."

A cloud passed over the countenance of Millbank as the name of Lord Monmouth was mentioned; but he said nothing, only turning towards Coningsby, with an air of kindness, to beg him, since to stay longer was impossible, to dine with him. Coningsby gladly agreed to this and the village clock was striking five when Mr. Millbank and his guest entered the gardens of his mansion and proceeded to the house.

The hall was capacious and classic; and as they approached the staircase the sweetest and the clearest voice exclaimed from above: "Papa, papa!" and instantly a young girl came bounding down the stairs; but suddenly, seeing a stranger with her father, she stopped upon the landing-place. Mr. Millbank beckoned her, and she came down slowly; at the foot of the stairs her father said briefly: "A friend you have often heard of, Edith—this is Mr. Coningsby."

She started, blushed very much, and then put forth her hand.

"How often have we all wished to see and to thank you!" Miss Edith Millbank remarked in tones of sensibility.

Opposite Coningsby at dinner that night was a portrait which greatly attracted his attention. It represented a woman extremely young and of a rare beauty. The face was looking out of the canvas, and the gaze of this picture disturbed the serenity of Coningsby. On rising to leave the table he said to Mr. Millbank, "By whom is that portrait, sir?"

The countenance of Millbank became disturbed; his expression was agitated, almost angry. "Oh! that is by a country artist," he said, "of whom you never heard."

III.—The Course of True Love

The Princess Colonna resolved that an alliance should take place between Coningsby and her step-daughter. But the plans of the princess, imparted to Mr. Rigby that she might gain his assistance in achieving them, were doomed to frustration. Coningsby fell deeply in love with Miss Millbank; and Lord Monmouth himself decided to marry Lucretia.

It was in Paris that Coningsby, on a visit to his grandfather, woke to the knowledge of his love for Edith Millbank. They met at a brilliant party, Miss Millbank in the care of her aunt, Lady Wallinger.

"Miss Millbank says that you have quite forgotten her," said a mutual friend.

Coningsby started, advanced, coloured a little, could not conceal his surprise. The lady, too, though more prepared, was not without confusion. Coningsby recalled at that moment the beautiful, bashful countenance that had so charmed him at Millbank; but two years had effected a wonderful change, and transformed the silent, embarrassed girl into a woman of surpassing beauty. That night the image of Edith Millbank was the last thought of Coningsby as he sank into an agitated slumber. In the morning his first thought was of her of whom he had dreamed. The light had dawned on his soul. Coningsby loved.

The course of true love was not to run smoothly with our hero. Within a few days he heard rumours that Miss Millbank was to be married to Sidonia, a wealthy and gifted man of the Jewish race, the friend of Lord Monmouth. Often had Coningsby admired the wisdom and the abilities of Sidonia; against such a rival he felt

powerless, and, without mustering courage to speak, left hastily for England.

But Coningsby had been deceived—the gossip was without foundation; and once more he was to meet Edith Millbank. This time, however, it was Mr. Millbank himself who vetoed the courtship.

Oswald had invited his friend to Millbank; and Coningsby, having learnt the baselessness of the report that had driven him from Paris, gladly accepted. Coningsby Castle was near to Hellingsley; and this estate Mr. Millbank had purchased, outbidding Lord Monmouth. Bitter enmity existed between the great marquess and the famous manufacturer—an old, implacable hatred. Mr. Millbank now resided at Hellingsley; and Coningsby left the castle rejoicing to meet his old Eton friend again, and still more the beautiful sister of his old friend.

Mr. Millbank was from home when he arrived; and Coningsby and Miss Millbank walked in the park, and rested by the margin of a stream. Assuredly a maiden and a youth more beautiful and engaging had seldom met in a scene more fresh and fair.

Coningsby gazed on the countenance of his companion. She turned her head, and met his glance.

"Edith," he said, in a tone of tremulous passion, "let me call you Edith! Yes," he continued, gently taking her hand; "let me call you my Edith! I love you!"

She did not withdraw her hand; but turned away a face flushed as the impending twilight.

The lovers returned late for dinner to find that Mr. Millbank was at home.

Next morning, in Mr. Millbank's room, Coningsby learnt that the marriage he looked forward to with all the ardour of youth was quite impossible.

"The sacrifices and the misery of such a marriage are certain and inseparable," said Mr. Millbank gravely,

but without harshness. "You are the grandson of Lord Monmouth; at present enjoying his favour, but dependent on his bounty. You may be the heir of his wealth to-morrow and to-morrow you may be the object of his hatred and persecution. Your grandfather and myself are foes—to the death. It is idle to mince phrases. I do not vindicate our mutual feelings; I may regret that they have ever arisen, especially at this exigency. Lord Monmouth would crush me, had he the power, like a worm; and I have curbed his proud fortunes often. These feelings of hatred may be deplored, but they do not exist; and now you are to go to this man, and ask his sanction to marry my daughter!"

"I would appease these hatreds," retorted Coningsby, "the origin of which I know not. I would appeal to my grandfather. I would show him Edith."

"He has looked upon as fair even as Edith," said Mr. Millbank. "And did that melt his heart? My daughter and yourself can meet no more."

In vain Coningsby pleaded his suit. It was not till Mr. Millbank told that he, too, had suffered—that he had loved Coningsby's own mother, and that she gave her heart to another, to die afterwards solitary and forsaken, tortured by Lord Monmouth—that Coningsby was silent. It was his mother's portrait he had looked upon that night at Millbank; and he understood the cause of the hatred.

He wrung Mr. Millbank's hand, and left Hellingsley in despair. But Oswald overtook him in the park; and, leaning on his friend's arm, Coningsby poured forth a hurried, impassioned, and incoherent strain—all that had occurred, all that he had dreamed, his baffled bliss, his actual despair, his hopeless outlook.

A thunderstorm overtook them; and Oswald took refuge from the elements at the castle. There, as they sat together, pledging their faithful friendship, the door opened, and Mr. Rigby appeared.

IV.—Coningsby's Political Faith

Lord Monmouth banished the Princess Colonna from his presence, and married Lucretia. Coningsby returned to Cambridge, and continued to enjoy his grandfather's hospitality whenever Lord Monmouth was in London.

Mr. Millbank had, in the meantime, become a member of parliament, having defeated Mr. Rigby in the contest for the representation of Dartford.

In the year 1840 a general election was imminent, and Lord Monmouth returned to London. He was weary of Paris; every day he found it more difficult to be amused. Lucretia had lost her charm: they had been married nearly three years. The marquess, from whom nothing could be concealed, perceived that often, while she elaborately attempted to divert him, her mind was wandering elsewhere.

He fell into the easy habit of dining in his private rooms, sometimes *tête-à-tête* with Villebecque, his private secretary, a cosmopolitan theatrical manager, whose tales and adventures about a kind of society which Lord Monmouth had always preferred to the polished and somewhat insipid circles in which he was born, had rendered him the prime favourite of his great patron. Villebecque's step-daughter Flora, a modest and retiring maiden, waited on Lucretia.

Back in London, Lord Monmouth, on the day of his arrival, welcomed Coningsby to his room, and at a sign from his master Villebecque left the apartment.

"You see, Harry," said Lord Monmouth, "that I am much occupied to-day, yet the business on which I wish to communicate with you is so pressing that it could not be postponed. These are not times when young men should be out of sight. Your public career will commence immediately. The government have resolved on a dissolution. My information is from the

highest quarter. The Whigs are going to dissolve their own House of Commons. Notwithstanding this, we can beat them, but the race requires the finest jockeying. We can't give a point. Now, if we had a good candidate, we could win Dartford. But Rigby won't do. He is too much of the old clique used up a hack; besides, a beaten horse. We are assured the name of Coningsby would be a host; there is a considerable section who support the present fellow who will not vote against a Coningsby. They have thought of you as a fit person; and I have approved of the suggestion. You will, therefore, be the candidate for Dartford with my entire sanction and support; and I have no doubt you will be successful."

To Coningsby the idea was appalling. To be the rival of Mr. Millbank on the hustings of Dartford! Vanquished or victorious, equally a catastrophe. He saw Edith canvassing for her father and against him. Besides, to enter the House of Commons a slave and a tool of party! Strongly anti-Whig, Coningsby distrusted the Conservative party, and looked for a new party of men who shared his youthful convictions and high political principles.

Lord Monmouth, however, brushed aside his grandson's objections.

"You are certainly still young; but I was younger by nearly two years when I first went in, and I found no difficulty. As for your opinions, you have no business to have any other than those I uphold. I want to see you in parliament. I tell you what it is, Harry," Lord Monmouth concluded, very emphatically, "members of this family may think as they like, but they must act as I please. You must go down on Friday to Dartford and declare yourself a candidate for the town, or I shall reconsider our mutual positions."

Coningsby left Monmouth House in dejection, but to his solemn resolution of political faith he remained

firm. He would not stand for Dartford against Mr. Millbank as the nominee of a party he could not follow. In terms of tenderness and humility he wrote to his grandfather that he positively declined to enter parliament except as the master of his own conduct.

In the same hour of his distress Coningsby overheard in his club two men discussing the engagement of Miss Millbank to the Marquess of Beaumanoir, the elder brother of his school friend, Henry Sydney.

Edith Millbank, too, had heard news at a London assembly of wealth and fashion that Coningsby was engaged to be married to Lady Theresa Sydney.

So easily does rumour spin her stories and smite her victims with sadness.

V.—Lady Monmouth's Departure

It was Flora, to whom Coningsby had been always kind and courteous, who told Lucretia that Lord Monmouth was displeased with his grandson.

"My lord is very angry with Mr. Coningsby," she said, shaking her head mournfully. "My lord told M. Villebecque that perhaps Mr. Coningsby would never enter the house again."

Lucretia immediately dispatched a note to Mr. Rigby, and, on the arrival of that gentleman, told him all she had learnt of the contention between Harry Coningsby and her husband.

"I told you to beware of him long ago," said Lady Monmouth. "He has ever been in the way of both of us."

"He is in my power," said Rigby. "We can crush him. He is in love with the daughter of Millbank, the man who bought Hellingsley. I found the younger Millbank quite domiciliated at the castle, a fact which of itself, if known to Lord Monmouth, would ensure the lad's annihilation."

"The time is now most mature for this. Let us not conceal it from ourselves that since this grandson's first visit to Coningsby Castle we have neither of us really been in the same position with my lord which we then occupied, or believed we should occupy. Go now; the game is before you! Rid me of this Coningsby, and I will secure all that you want.'

"It shall be done," said Rigby "it must be done."

Lady Monmouth bade Mr. Rigby hasten at once to the marquess and bring her news of the interview. She awaited with some excitement his return. Her original prejudice against Coningsby and jealousy of his influence had been aggravated by the knowledge that, although after her marriage Lord Monmouth had made a will which secured to her a very large portion of his great wealth, the energies and resources of the marquess had of late been directed to establish Coningsby in a barony.

Two hours elapsed before Mr. Rigby returned. There was a churlish and unusual look about him.

"Lord Monmouth suggests that, as you were tired of Paris, your ladyship might find the German baths at Kissingen agreeable. A paragraph in the 'Morning Post' would announce that his lordship was about to join you; and even if his lordship did not ultimately reach you, an amicable separation would be effected."

In vain Lucretia stormed. Mr. Rigby mentioned that Lord Monmouth had already left the house and would not return, and finally announced that Lucretia's letters to a certain Prince Trautsmandorff were in his lordship's possession.

A few days later, and Coningsby read in the papers of Lady Monmouth's departure to Kissingen. He called at Monmouth House, to find the place empty, and to learn from the porter that Lord Monmouth was about to occupy a villa at Richmond.

Coningsby entertained for his grandfather a sincere

affection. With the exception of their last unfortunate interview, he had experienced nothing but kindness from Lord Monmouth. He determined to pay him a visit at Richmond.

Lord Monmouth, who was entertaining two French ladies at his villa, recoiled from grandsons and relations and ties of all kinds; but Coningsby so pleasantly impressed his fair visitors that Lord Monmouth decided to ask him to dinner. Thus, in spite of the combinations of Lucretia and Mr. Rigby, and his grandfather's resentment, within a month of the memorable interview at Monmouth House, Coningsby found himself once more a welcome guest at Lord Monmouth's table.

In that same month other important circumstances also occurred.

At a fête in some beautiful gardens on the banks of the Thames, Coningsby and Edith Millbank were both present. The announcement was made of the forthcoming marriage of Lady Theresa Sydney to Mr. Eustace Lyle, a friend of Mr. Coningsby; and later, from the lips of Lady Wallinger herself, Miss Millbank's aunt, Coningsby learnt how really groundless was the report of Lord Beaumanoir's engagement.

"Lord Beaumanoir admires her—has always admired her," Lady Wallinger explained to Coningsby; "but Edith has given him no encouragement whatever."

At the end of the terrace Edith and Coningsby met. He seized the occasion to walk some distance by her side.

"How could you ever doubt me?" said Coningsby, after some time.

"I was unhappy."

"And now we are to each other as before."

"And will be, come what may," said Edith.

VI.—Lord Monmouth's Money

In the midst of Christmas revels at the country house of Mr. Eustace Lyle, surrounded by the duke and duchess and their children—the Sydneys—Coningsby was called away by a messenger, who brought news of the sudden death of Lord Monmouth. The marquess had died at supper at his Richmond villa, with no persons near him but those who were very amusing.

The body had been removed to Monmouth House; and after the funeral, in the principal saloon of Monmouth House, the will was eventually read.

The date of the will was 1829; and by this document the sum of £10,000 was left to Coningsby, who at that time was unknown to his grandfather.

But there were many codicils. In 1832, the £10,000 was increased to £50,000. In 1836, after Coningsby's visit to the castle, £50,000 was left to the Princess Lucretia, and Coningsby was left sole residuary legatee.

After the marriage, an estate of £9,000 a year was left to Coningsby, £20,000 to Mr. Rigby, and the whole of the residue went to issue by Lady Monmouth.

In the event of there being no issue, the whole of the estate was to be divided equally between Lady Monmouth and Coningsby. In 1839, Mr. Rigby was reduced to £10,000, Lady Monmouth was to receive £3,000 per annum, and the rest, without reserve, went absolutely to Coningsby.

The last codicil was dated immediately after the separation with Lady Monmouth.

All dispositions in favour of Coningsby were revoked, and he was left with the interest of the original £10,000, the executors to invest the money as they thought best for his advancement, provided it were not placed in any manufactory.

Mr. Rigby received £5,000, M. Villebecque £30,000,

and all the rest, residue and remainder, to Flora, commonly called Flora Villebecque, step-child of Armand Villebecque, "but who is my natural daughter by an actress at the Théâtre Français in the years 1811–15, by the name of Stella."

Sidonia lightened the blow for Coningsby as far as philosophy could be of use.

"I ask you," he said, "which would you have rather lost—your grandfather's inheritance or your right leg?"

"Most certainly my inheritance."

"Or your left arm?"

"Still the inheritance."

"Would you have given up a year of your life for that fortune trebled?"

"Even at twenty-three I would have refused the terms."

"Come, then, Coningsby, the calamity cannot be very great. You have health, youth, good looks, great abilities, considerable knowledge, a fine courage, and no contemptible experience. You can live on £300 a year. Read for the Bar."

"I have resolved," said Coningsby. "I will try for the Great Seal!"

Next morning came a note from Flora, begging Mr. Coningsby to call upon her. It was an interview he would rather have avoided. But Flora had not injured him, and she was, after all, his kin. She was alone when Coningsby entered the room.

"I have robbed you of your inheritance."

"It was not mine by any right, legal or moral. The fortune is yours, dear Flora, by every right; and there is no one who wishes more fervently that it may contribute to your happiness than I do."

"It is killing me," said Flora mournfully. "I must tell you what I feel. This fortune is yours. I never thought to be so happy as I shall be if you will generously accept it."

"You are, as I have ever thought you, the kindest and most tender-hearted of beings," said Coningsby, much moved; "but the custom of the world does not permit such acts to either of us as you contemplate. Have confidence in yourself. You will be happy."

"When I die, these riches will be yours; that, at all events, you cannot prevent," were Flora's last generous words.

VII.—On Life's Threshold

Coningsby established himself in the Temple to read law; and Lord Henry Sydney, Oswald Millbank, and other old Eton friends rallied round their early leader.

"I feel quite convinced that Coningsby will become Lord Chancellor," Henry Sydney said gravely, after leaving the Temple.

The General Election of 1841, which Lord Monmouth had expected a year before, found Coningsby a solitary student in his lonely chambers in the Temple. All his friends and early companions were candidates, and with sanguine prospects. They sent their addresses to Coningsby, who, deeply interested, traced in them the influence of his own mind.

Then, in the midst of the election, one evening in July, Coningsby, catching up a third edition of the "Sun," was startled by the word "Dartford" in large type. Below it were the headlines:

"Extraordinary Affair! Withdrawal of the Liberal Candidate! Two Tory Candidates in the Field!"

Mr. Millbank, at the last moment, had retired, and had persuaded his supporters to nominate Harry Coningsby in his place. The fight was between Coningsby and Rigby.

Oswald Millbank, who had just been returned to parliament, came up to London; and from him, as they travelled to Dartford, Coningsby grasped the change of events. Sidonia had explained to Lady Wallinger

the cause of Coningsby's disinheritance. Lady Wallinger had told Oswald and Edith; and Oswald had urged on his father the recognition of his friend's affection for his sister.

On his own impulse Mr. Millbank decided that Coningsby should contest Dartford.

Mr. Rigby was beaten; and Coningsby arrived at Dartford in time to receive the cheers of thousands. From the hustings he gave his first address to a public assembly; and by general agreement no such speech had ever been heard in the borough before.

Early in the autumn Harry and Edith were married at Millbank, and they passed their first moon at Hellingsley.

The death of Flora, who had bequeathed the whole of her fortune to the husband of Edith, took place before the end of the year, hastened by the fatal inheritance which disturbed her peace and embittered her days, haunting her heart with the recollection that she had been the instrument of injuring the only being whom she loved.

Coningsby passed his next Christmas in his own hall, with his beautiful and gifted wife by his side, and surrounded by the friends of his heart and his youth.

The young couple stand now on the threshold of public life. What will be their fate? Will they maintain in august assemblies and high places the great truths, which, in study and in solitude, they have embraced? Or will vanity confound their fortunes, and jealousy wither their sympathies?

Sybil, or the Two Nations

I.—Hard Times for the Poor

It was Derby Day, 1837. Charles Egremont was in the ring at Epsom with a band of young patricians. Groups surrounded the betting post, and the odds were shouted lustily by a host of horsemen. Egremont had backed Caravan to win, and Caravan lost by half a length. Charles Egremont was the younger brother of the Earl of Marney; he had received £15,000 on the death of his father, and had spent it. Disappointed in love at the age of twenty-four, Egremont left England, to return after eighteen months' absence a much wiser man. He was now conscious that he wanted an object, and, musing over action, was ignorant how to act.

The morning after the Derby, Egremont, breakfasting with his mother, learnt that King William IV. was dying, and that a dissolution of parliament was at hand. Lady Marney was a great stateswoman, a leader in fashionable politics.

"Charles," said Lady Marney, "you must stand for the old borough, for Marbury. No doubt the contest will be very expensive, but it will be a happy day for me

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"Sybil, or the Two Nations" was published in 1845, a year after "Coningsby," and in it the novelist "considered the condition of the people." The author himself, writing in 1870 of this novel, said: "At that time the Chartist agitation was still fresh in the public memory, and its repetition was far from improbable. I had visited and observed with care all the localities introduced, and as an accurate and never exaggerated picture of a remarkable period in our domestic history, and of a popular organisation which in its extent and completeness has perhaps never been equalled, the pages of "Sybil" may, I venture to believe, be consulted with confidence." "Sybil," indeed, is not only an extremely interesting novel; but as a study of social life in England it is of very definite historical value.

to see you in parliament, and Marney will, of course, supply the funds. I shall write to him, and perhaps you will do so yourself."

The election took place, and Egremont was returned. Then he paid a visit to his brother at Marney Abbey, and an old estrangement between the two was ended.

Marney Abbey was as remarkable for its comfort and pleasantness of accommodation as for its ancient state and splendour. It had been a religious house. The founder of the Marney family, a confidential domestic of one of the favourites of Henry VIII., had contrived by unscrupulous zeal to obtain the grant of the abbey lands, and in the reign of Elizabeth came a peerage.

The present Lord Marney upheld the workhouse, hated allotments and infant schools, and declared the labourers on his estate to be happy and contented with a wage of seven shillings a week.

The burning of hayricks on the Abbey Farm at the time of Egremont's visit showed that the torch of the incendiary had been introduced and that a beacon had been kindled in the agitated neighbourhood. For misery lurked in the wretched tenements of the town of Marney, and fever was rife. The miserable hovels of the people had neither windows nor doors, and were unpaved, and looked as if they could scarcely hold together. There were few districts in the kingdom where the rate of wages was more depressed.

"What do you think of this fire?" said Egremont to a labourer at the Abbey Farm.

"I think 'tis hard times for the poor, sir," was the reply, given with a shake of the head.

II.—The Old Tradition

Why was England not the same land as in the days of his light-hearted youth?" Charles Egremont mused, as he wandered among the ruins of the ancient abbey.

"Why were these hard times for the poor?" Brooding over these questions, he observed two men hard by in the old cloister garden, one of lofty stature, nearer forty than fifty years of age, the other younger and shorter, with a pale face redeemed from ugliness by its intellectual brow. Egremont joined the strangers, and talked.

"Our queen reigns over two nations, between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy—the rich and the poor," said the younger stranger.

As he spoke, from the lady chapel rose the evening hymn to the Virgin in tones of almost supernatural tenderness.

The melody ceased; and Egremont beheld a female form, a countenance youthful, and of a beauty as rare as it was choice.

The two men joined the beautiful maiden; and the three quitted the abbey grounds together without another word, and pursued their way to the railway station.

"I have seen the tomb of the last abbot of Marney, and I marked your name on the stone, my father," said the maiden. "You must regain our lands for us, Stephen," she added to the younger man.

"I can't understand why you lost sight of those papers, Walter," said Stephen Morley.

"You see, friend, they were never in my possession; they were not mine when I saw them. They were my father's. He was a small yeoman, well-to-do in the world, but always hankering after the old tradition that the lands were ours. This Hatton got hold of him; he did his work well, I have heard. It is twenty-five years since my father brought his writ of right, and though baffled, he was not beaten. Then he died; his affairs were in great confusion; he had mortgaged his land for his writ. There were debts that could not be paid. I had no capital. I would not sink to be a labourer. I had heard much of the high wages of this new industry; I left the land."

"And the papers?"

"I never thought of them, or thought of them with disgust, as the cause of my ruin. Of Hatton, I have not heard since my father's death. He had quitted Mowbray, and none could give me tidings of him. When you came and showed me in a book that the last abbot of Marney was a Walter Gerard, the old feeling stirred again, and though I am but the overlooker at Mr. Trafford's mill, I could not help telling you that my fathers fought at Agincourt."

They approached the station, entered the train, and two hours later arrived at Mowbray. Gerard and Morley left their companion at a convent gate in the suburbs of the manufacturing town.

The two men made their way through the streets and entered a prominent public house. Here they sought an interview with the landlord, and from him got information of Hatton's brother.

"You have heard of a place called Hell-house Yard?" said the publican. "Well, he lives there, and his name is Simon, and that's all I know about him."

III.—The Gulf Impassable

When it came to the point, Lord Marney very much objected to paying Egremont's election expenses, and proposed instead that he should accompany him to Mowbray Castle, and marry Earl Mowbray's daughter, Lady Joan Fitz-Warene.

Lord Mowbray was the grandson of a waiter, who had gone out to India a gentleman's valet, and returned a nabob. Lord Mowbray's two daughters—he had no sons—were great heiresses. Lady Joan was doctrinal; Lady Maud inquisitive. Egremont fell in love with neither, and the visit was a failure. Lord Marney declined to pay the election expenses.

The brothers parted in anger; and Egremont took up

his abode in a cottage in Mowedale, a few miles outside the town of Mowbray. He was drawn to this by the knowledge that Walter Gerard and his daughter Sybil, and their friend Stephen Morley, lived close by. Of Egremont's rank these three were ignorant. Sybil had met him with Mr. St. Lys, the good vicar of Mowbray, relieving the misery of a poor weaver's family in the town, and at Mowedale he passed as Mr. Franklin, a journalist.

For some weeks Egremont enjoyed the peace of rural life, and the intercourse with the Gerards ripened into friendship. When the time came for parting, for Egremont had to take his seat in parliament, it was a tender farewell on both sides.

Egremont, embarrassed by his deception, could not only speak vaguely of their meeting again soon. The thought of parting from Sybil nearly overwhelmed him.

When he met Gerard and Morley again it was in London, and disguise was no longer possible. Gerard and Morley came as delegates to the Chartist National Convention in 1839, and, deputed by their fellows to interview Charles Egremont, M.P., came face to face with "Mr. Franklin."

The general misery in the country at that time was appalling. Weavers and miners were starving, agricultural labourers were driven into the new workhouses, and riots were of common occurrence. The Chartists believed their proposals would improve matters, other working-class leaders believed that a general stoppage of work would be more effective.

Sybil, in London with her father, ardently supported the popular movement. Meeting Egremont near Westminster Abbey on the very day after Gerard and Morley had waited upon him, she allowed him to escort her home. Then, for the first time, she learnt that her friend "Mr. Franklin" was the brother of Lord Marney.

It was in vain Egremont urged that they might still be

friends, that the gulf between rich and poor was not impassable.

"Oh, sir," said Sybil haughtily, "I am one of those who believe the gulf is impassable—yes, utterly impassable!"

IV.—Plotting Against Lord De Mowbray

Stephen Morley was the editor of the "Mowbray Phœnix," a teetotaler, a vegetarian, a believer in moral force. The friend of Gerard, and in love with Sybil, Stephen looked with no favour on Egremont. Although a delegate to the Chartist Convention, Stephen had not forgotten the claims of Gerard to landed estate, and had pursued his inquiries as to the whereabouts of Hatton with some success.

First Stephen had journeyed to Woodgate, commonly known as Hell-house Yard, a wild and savage place, the abode of a lawless race of men who fashioned locks and instruments of iron. Here he had found Simon Hatton, who knew nothing of his brother's residence.

By accident Stephen discovered that the man he sought lived in the Temple. Baptist Hatton at that time was the most famous of heraldic antiquaries. Not a pedigree in dispute, not a peerage in abeyance, but it was submitted to his consideration. A solitary man was Baptist Hatton, wealthy and absorbed in his pursuits. The meeting with Morley excited him, and he turned over the matter anxiously in his mind as he sat alone.

"The son of Walter Gerard, a Chartist delegate! The best blood in England! Those infernal papers! They made my fortune; and yet the deed has cost me many a pang. It seemed innoxious; the old man dead, insolvent; myself starving; his son ignorant of all—to whom could they be of use, for it required thousands to work them? And yet with all my wealth and power what memory shall I leave? Not a relative in the world, except a barbarian. Ah! had I a child like the beautiful daughter

of Gerard. I have seen her. He must be a fiend who could injure her. I am that fiend. Let me see what can be done. What if I married her?"

But Hatton did not offer marriage to Sybil. He did much to make her stay in London pleasant; but there was something about the maiden that awed while it fascinated him. A Catholic himself, Hatton was not surprised to hear from Gerard of Sybil's wish to enter a convent. "And to my mind she is right. My daughter cannot look to marriage; no man that she could marry would be worthy of her."

This did not deter Hatton from considering how the papers relating to Gerard's lost estates could be recovered.

The first move was an action entered against Lord de Mowbray, and this brought that distinguished peer to Mr. Hatton's chambers in the Temple, for Hatton was at that time advising Lord de Mowbray in the matter of reviving an ancient barony. Hatton easily quieted his client.

"Mr. Walter Gerard can do nothing without the deed of '77. Your documents you say are all secure?"

"They are at this moment in the muniment room of the tower of Mowbray Castle."

"Keep them; this action is a feint."

As for Mr. Baptist Hatton, the next time we see him a few months had elapsed. He is at the principal hotel in Mowbray in consultation with Stephen Morley.

A great labour demonstration had taken place the previous night on the moors outside the town, and Gerard had been acclaimed as a popular hero.

"Documents are in existence," said Hatton, "which prove the title of Walter Gerard to the proprietorship of this great district. Two hundred thousand human beings yesterday acknowledged the supremacy of Gerard. Suppose they had known that within the walls of Mowbray Castle were contained the proofs that Walter

Gerard was the lawful possessor of the lands on which they live? Moral force is a fine thing, friend Morley, but the public spirit is inflamed here. You are a leader of the people. Let us have another meeting on the Moor! you can put your fingers in a trice on the man who will do our work. Mowbray Castle in their possession, a certain iron chest, painted blue, and blazoned with the shield of Valence, would be delivered to you. You shall have £10,000 down and I will take you back to London besides."

"The effort would fail," said Stephen Morley. "Wages must drop still more, and the discontent here be deeper. But I will keep the secret; I will treasure it up."

V.—Liberty—At a Price

While Mr. Baptist Hatton and Stephen Morley discussed the possible recovery of the papers, much happened in London. Gerard became a marked man in the Chartist Convention, a member of a small but resolute committee. Egremont, now deeply in love with Sybil, declared his suit.

"From the first moment I beheld you in the starlit arch of Marney, your image has never been absent from my consciousness. Do not reject my love; it is deep as your nature, and fervent as my own. Banish those prejudices that have embittered your existence. If I be a noble, I have none of the accidents of nobility. I cannot offer you wealth, splendour, and power; but I can offer you the devotion of an entranced being, aspirations that you shall guide, an ambition that you shall govern."

"These words are mystical and wild," said Sybil in amazement. "You are Lord Marney's brother; I learnt it but yesterday. Retain your hand, and share your life and fortunes! You forget what I am. No, no, kind friend—for such I'll cali you—your opinion of me touches me deeply. I am not used to such passages in

life. A union between the child and brother of nobles and a daughter of the people is impossible. It would mean estrangement from your family, their hopes destroyed, their pride outraged. Believe me, the gulf is impassable."

The Chartist petition was rejected by the House of Commons contemptuously. Riots took place in Birmingham. Sybil grew anxious for her father's safety.

Egremont's speech in parliament on the presentation of the national petition created some perplexity among his aristocratic relatives and acquaintances. It was free from the slang of faction—the voice of a noble who had upheld the popular cause, who had pronounced that the rights of labour were as sacred as those of property, that the social happiness of the millions should be the statesman's first object.

Sybil, enjoying the calm of St. James's Park on a summer morning, read the speech with emotion, and while she still held the paper the orator himself stood before her. She smiled without distress, and presently confided to Egremont that she was unhappy, about her father.

"I honour your father," said Egremont. "Counsel him to return to Mowbray. Exert every energy to get him to leave London at once—to-night if possible. After this business at Birmingham the government will strike at the convention. If your father returns to Mowbray and is quiet, he has a chance of not being disturbed."

Sybil returned and warned her father. "You are in danger," she cried, "great and immediate. Let us quit this city to-night."

"To-morrow, my child," Walter Gerard assured her, "we will return to Mowbray. To-night our council meets, and we have work of utmost importance. We must discountenance scenes of violence. The moment our council is over I will come back to you."

But Walter Gerard did not return. While Sybil sat

and waited, Stephen Morley entered the room. His manner was strange and unusual.

"Your father is in danger; time is precious. I can endure no longer the anguish of my life. I love you, and if you will not be mine, I care for no one's fate. I can save your father. If I see him before eight o'clock, I can convince him that the government knows of his intentions, and will arrest him to-night. I am ready to do this service—to save the father from death and the daughter from despair, if she would but only say to me: 'I have but one reward, and it is yours.'"

"It is bitter, this," said Sybil, "bitter for me and mine; but for you pollution, this bargaining of blood. In the name of the Holy Virgin I answer you—no!"

Morley rushed frantically from the room.

Sybil, in despair, made her way to a coffee-house near Charing Cross, which she knew had been much frequented by members of the Chartist Convention. Here, after some delay, she was given the fatal address in Hunt Street, Seven Dials.

Sybil arrived at the meeting a few minutes before the police raided the premises. She was found with her father, and taken with him and six other men to Bow Street Police Station. A note to Egremont procured her release in the early hours of the morning.

Walter Gerard in due time was sent to trial, convicted and sentenced to eighteen month's confinement in York Castle.

VI.—Within the Castle Walls

In 1842 came the great stoppage of work. The mills ceased; the miners went "to play," despairing of a fair day's wage for a fair day's work; and the inhabitants of Woodgate—the Hell-cats, as they were called—stirred up by a Chartist delegate, sallied forth with Simon Hatton, named the "liberator," at their head to deal ruthlessly with all "oppressors of the people."

They sacked houses, plundered cellars, ravaged provision shops, destroyed gas-works and stormed workhouses. In time they came to Mowbray. There the liberator came face to face with Baptist Hatton without recognising his brother.

Stephen Morley and Baptist Hatton were in close conference.

"The times are critical," said Hatton.

"Mowbray may be burnt to the ground before the troops arrive," Morley replied.

"And the castle, too," said Hatton quietly. "I was thinking only yesterday of a certain box of papers. To business, friend Morley. This savage relative of mine cannot be quiet. If he does not destroy Trafford's Mill it will be the castle. Why not the castle instead of the mill?"

Trafford's Mill was saved by the direct intervention of Walter Gerard. All the people of Mowbray knew the good reputation of the Traffords, and Gerard's eloquence turned the mob from the attack.

While the liberator and the Hell-cats hesitated, a man named Dandy Mick, prompted by Morley, urged that a walk should be taken in Lord de Mowbray's park.

The proposition was received with shouts of approbation. Gerard succeeded in detaching a number of Mowbray men, but the Hell-cats, armed with bludgeons, poured into the park and on to the castle.

Lady de Mowbray and her friends made their escape, taking Sybil, who had sought refuge from the mob, with them.

Mr. St. Lys gathered a body of men in defence of the castle, but came too late to prevent the entrance of the Hell-cats. Singularly enough, Morley and one or two of his followers entered with the liberator.

The first great rush was to the cellars, and the invaders were quickly at work knocking off the heads of bottles, and brandishing torches. Morley and his lads traced

their way down a corridor to the winding steps of the Round Tower, and forced their way into the muniment room of the castle. It was not till his search had nearly been abandoned in despair that he found the small blue box blazoned with the arms of Valence. He passed it hastily to a trusted companion, Dandy Mick, and bade him deliver it to Sybil Gerard at the convent.

At this moment the noise of musketry was heard; the yeomanry were on the scene.

Morley, cut off from flight by the military, was shot, pistol in hand, with the name of Sybil on his lips. "The world will misjudge me," he thought—"they will call me hypocrite, but the world is wrong."

The man with the box escaped through the window, and in spite of the fire, troopers, and mob, reached the convent in safety.

The castle was burnt to the ground by the torches of the Hell-cats.

Sybil, separated from her friends, found herself surrounded by a band of drunken ruffians. She was rescued by a yeomanry officer, who pressed her to his heart.

"Never to part again," said Egremont.

Under Egremont's protection, Sybil returned to the convent, and there in the court-yard they found Dandy Mick, who had refused to deliver his charge, and was lying down with the blue box for his pillow. He had fulfilled his mission. Sybil, too agitated to perceive all its import, delivered the box into the custody of Egremont, who, bidding farewell to Sybil, bade Mick follow him to his hotel.

While these events were happening, Lord Marney, hearing an alarmed and exaggerated report of the insurrection, and believing that Egremont's forces were by no means equal to the occasion, had set out for Mowbray with his own troop of yeomanry.

Crossing the moor, he encountered Walter Gerard

with a great multitude, whom Gerard headed for purposes of peace.

His mind inflamed, and hating at all times any popular demonstration, Lord Marney hastily read the Riot Act, and the people were fired on and sabred. The indignant spirit of Gerard resisted, and the father of Sybil was shot dead. Instantly arose a groan, and a feeling of frenzy came over the people. Armed only with stones and bludgeons they defied the troopers, and rushed at the horsemen; a shower of stones rattled without ceasing on the helmet of Lord Marney, nor did the people rest till Lord Marney fell lifeless on Mowbray Moor, stoned to death.

The writ of right against Lord de Mowbray proved successful in the courts, and his lordship died of the blow.

For a long time after the death of her father Sybil remained in helpless woe. The widowed Lady Marney, however, came over one day, and carried her back to Marney Abbey, never again to quit it until the bridal day, when the Earl and Countess of Marney departed for Italy.

Though the result was not what Mr. Hatton had once anticipated, the idea that he had deprived Sybil of her inheritance had, ever since he had become acquainted with her, been the plague-spot of Hatton's life, and there was nothing he desired more than to see her restored to those rights, and to be instrumental in that restoration.

Dandy Mick was rewarded for all the dangers he had encountered in the service of Sybil, and was set up in business by Lord Marney. A year after the burning of Mowbray Castle, on the return of the Earl and Countess of Marney to England, the romantic marriage and the enormous wealth of Lord and Lady Marney were still the talk in fashionable circles.

Tancred, or the New Crusade

I.—Tancred Goes Forth on His Quest

TANCRED, the Marquis of Montacute, was certainly strangely distracted on his twenty-first birthday. He stood beside his father, the Duke of Bellamont, in the famous Crusaders' gallery in the Castle of Montacute, listening to the congratulations which the mayor and corporation of Montacute town were addressing to him; but all the time he kept his eyes fixed on the magnificent tapestries from which the name of the gallery was derived. His namesake, Tancred of Montacute, had distinguished himself in the Third Crusade by saving the life of King Richard at the siege of Ascalon, and his exploits were depicted on the fine Gobelins work hanging on the walls of the great hall. Oblivious of the gorgeous ceremony in which he was playing the principal part, the young Marquis of Montacute stared at the pictures of the Crusader, and a wild, fantastical idea took hold of him.

He was the only child of the Duke of Bellamont, and all the high nobility of England were assembled to cele-

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"Tancred," published in 1847, completes the trilogy, which began with "Coningsby" in 1844, and had its second volume in "Sybil" in 1845. In these three novels Disraeli gave to the world his political, social, and religious philosophy. "Coningsby" was mainly political, "Sybil" mainly social, and in "Tancred," as the author tells us, Disraeli dealt with the origin of the Christian Church of England and its relation to the Hebrew race whence Christianity sprang. "Public opinion recognized the truth and sincerity of these views," although their general spirit ran counter to current Liberal utilitarianism. Although "Tancred" lacks the vigour of "Sibyl" and the wit of "Coningsby," it is full of the colour of the East, and the satire and irony in the part relating to Tancred's life in England are vastly entertaining. As in others of Disraeli's novels, many of the characters here are portraits of real personages.

brate his coming of age. Everything that fortune could bestow seemed to have been given to him. He was the heir of the greatest and richest of English dukes, and his life was made smooth and easy. His father had got a seat in parliament waiting for him, and his mother had already selected a noble and beautiful young lady for his wife. Neither of them had yet consulted their son, but Tancred was so sweet and gentle a boy that they did not dream he would oppose their wishes. They had planned out his life for him ever since he was born, with the view to educating him for the position which he was to occupy in the English aristocracy, and he had always taken the path which they had chosen for him.

In the evening, the duke summoned his son into his library.

"My dear Tancred," he said, "I have a piece of good news for you on your birthday. Hungerford feels that he cannot represent our constituency now that you have come of age, and, with great kindness, he is resigning his seat in your favour. He says that the Marquis of Montacute ought to stand for the town of Montacute, so you will be able to enter parliament at once."

"But I do not wish to enter parliament," said Tancred.

The duke leant back from his desk with a look of painful surprise on his face.

"Not enter parliament?" he exclaimed. "Every Lord Montacute has gone into the House of Commons before taking his seat in the House of Lords. It is an excellent training."

"I am not anxious to enter the House of Lords either," said Tancred. "And I hope, my dear father," he added, with a smile that lit up his young, grave, beautiful face, "that it will be very, very long before I succeed to your place there."

"What, then, do you intend to do, my boy?" said Bellamont, in intense perplexity. "You are the heir to one of the greatest positions in the state, and you have

duties to perform. How are you going to fit yourself for them?"

"That is what I have been thinking of for years," said Tancred. "Oh, my dear father, if you knew how long and earnestly I have prayed for guidance! Yes, I have duties to perform! But in this wild, confused, and aimless age of ours, what man can see what his duties are? For my part, I cannot find that it is my duty to maintain the present order of things. In nothing in our religion, our government, our manners, do I find faith. And if there is no faith, how can there be any duty? We have ceased to be a nation. We are a mere crowd, kept from utter anarchy by the remains of an old system which we are daily destroying."

"But what would you do, my dear boy?" said the duke, pale with anxiety. "Have you found any remedy?"

"No," said Tancred mournfully. "There is no remedy to be found in England. Oh, let me save myself, father! Let me save our people from the corruption and ruin that threaten us!"

"But what do you want to do? Where do you want to go?" said the duke.

"I want to go to God!" cried the young nobleman, his blue eyes flaming with a strange light. "How is it that the Almighty Power does not send down His angels to enlighten us in our perplexities? Where is the Paraclete, the Comforter Who was promised us? I must go and seek him."

"You are a visionary, my boy," said the duke, gazing at him in blank astonishment.

"Was the Montacute that fought by the side of King Richard in the Holy Land a visionary?" said Tancred. "All I ask is to be allowed to follow in his footsteps. For three days and three nights he knelt in prayer at the tomb of his Redeemer. Six centuries and more have gone by since then. It is high time that we renewed our

intercourse with the Most High in the country of His chosen people. I, too, would kneel at that tomb. I, too, surrounded by the holy hills and groves of Jerusalem, would lift my voice to Heaven, and ask for inspiration."

"But surely God will hear your prayers in England as well as in Palestine?"

"No," said his son. "He has never raised up a prophet or a great saint in this country. If we want Him to speak to us as He spoke to the men of old, we must go, like the Crusaders, to the Holy Land."

Finding that he could not turn his son from the strange course on which he was bent, the duke got a great prelate to try and persuade him that all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

"We live in an age of progress," reasoned the philosophic bishop. "Religion is spreading with the spread of civilisation. How all our towns are growing! We shall soon see a bishop in Manchester."

"I want to see an angel in Manchester," replied Tancred.

It was no use arguing with a man who talked in this way, and the duke gave Tancred permission to set out on his new crusade.

II.—The Vigil by the Tomb

The moon sank behind the Mount of Olives, leaving the towers, minarets, and domes of Jerusalem in deep shadow; the lamps in the city went out, and every outline was lost in gloom; but the Church of the Holy Sepulchre still shone in the darkness like a beacon light. There, while every soul in Jerusalem slumbered, Tancred knelt in prayer by the tomb of Christ, under the lighted dome, waiting for the fire from heaven to strike into his soul.

His strange vigil was the talk of Syria. It is remarkable how quickly news travels in the East.

"Do you know," said Besso, Rothschild's agent, to his foster-son Fakredeen, an emir of Lebanon, as they sat talking in a house near the gate of Sion, "the young Englishman has brought me such a letter that if he were to tell me to rebuild Solomon's temple, I must do it!"

"He must be fabulously rich!" said Fakredeen, with a sigh. "What has he come here for? The English do not come on pilgrimages. They are all infidels."

"Well, he has come on a pilgrimage," said Besso, "and he is the greatest of English princes. He kneels all night and day in the church over there."

Yes, after a week of solitude, fasting, and prayer, Tancred was keeping vigil before the empty Sepulchre, where Tancred of Montacute had knelt six hundred years before. Day after day, night after night, he prayed for inspiration, but no divine voice broke in upon his impassioned reveries. It was for him that Alonzo Lara, the prior of Terra Santa, kept the light burning all night long at the Holy Sepulchre, for the Spaniard had been moved by the deep faith of the young English nobleman. And one day he said to him:

"Sinai led to Calvary. I think it would be wise for you to trace the path backward from Calvary to Sinai."

It was extremely perilous at that time to adventure into the great desert, for the wild Bedouin tribes were encamped there. But, in spite of this, Tancred made arrangements with an Arabian chief, Sheikh Hassan, and set out for Sinai at the head of a well-armed band of Arabs.

"Ah!" said the sheikh, as they entered the mountainous country, after a three days' march across the wilderness. "Look at these tracks of horses and camels in the defile. The marks are fresh. See that your guns are primed!" he cried to his men.

As he spoke a troop of wild horsemen galloped down the ravine.

"Hassan," one of them shouted, "is that the brother

of the Queen of the English with you? Let him ride with us, and you may return in peace."

"He is my brother, too," said Hassan. "Stand aside, you sons of Eblis, or you shall bite the earth."

A wild shout from every height of the defile was the answer. Tancred looked up. The crest on either side was lined with Bedouins, each with his musket levelled.

"There is only one thing for us to do," said Tancred to Hassan. "Let us charge through the defile, and die like men!"

Seizing his pistols, he shot the first horseman through the head, and disabled another. Then he charged down the ravine, and Hassan and his men followed, and scattered the horsemen before them. The Bedouins fired down on them from the crests, and, in a few moments, the place was filled with smoke, and Tancred could not see a yard around him. Still he galloped on, and the smoke suddenly drifted, and he found himself at the mouth of the defile, with a few followers behind him. A crowd of Bedouins were waiting for him.

"Die fighting! Die fighting!" he shouted. Then his horse stumbled, stabbed from beneath by a Bedouin dagger, and fell in the sand. Before he could get his feet out of the stirrups, he was overpowered and bound.

"Don't hurt him," said the Bedouin chief. "Every drop of his blood is worth ten thousand piastres."

Late that night, as Amalek, the great Rechabite Bedouin sheikh, was sitting before his tent, a horseman rode up to him.

"Salaam," he cried. "Sheikh of sheikhs, it is done! The brother of the Queen of England is your slave!"

"Good!" said Amalek. "May your mother eat the hump of a young camel! Is the brother of the queen with Sheikh Salem?"

"No," said the horseman, "Sheikh Salem is in paradise, and many of our men are with him. The brother of the Queen of the English is a mighty warrior. He

fought like a lion, but we brought his horse down at last and took him alive."

"Good!" said Amalek. "Camels shall be given to all the widows of the men he has killed, and I will find them new husbands. Go and tell Fakredeen the good news!"

Amalek and Fakredeen would not have cared had they lost a hundred men in the affair. The Bedouin chief and the emir of Lebanon could bring into the field more than twenty thousand lances, and the capture of Tancred was part of a political scheme which they were engineering for the conquest of Syria. They knew from Besso that the young English prince was fabulously rich, and, as they wanted arms, they meant to hold him to the extraordinary ransom of two million piastres.

"My foster father will pay it," said Fakredeen. "He told me that he would have to rebuild Solomon's temple if the English prince asked him to. We will get him to help us rebuild Solomon's empire."

III.—The Vision on the Mount

On the wild granite scarp of Mount Sinai, about seven thousand feet above the blue seas that lave its base, is a small plain hemmed in by pinnacles of rock. In the centre of the plain are a cypress tree and a fountain. This is the traditional scene of the greatest event in the history of mankind. It was here that Moses received the divine laws on which the civilisation of the world is based.

Tancred of Montacute knelt down on the sacred soil, and bowed his head in prayer. Far below him, in one of the green valleys sloping down to the sea, Fakredeen and a band of Bedouins pitched their tents for the night, and talked in awed tones of their strange companion. Wonderful is the power of soul with which a great idea endues a man. The young emir of Lebanon and his men were no longer the captors of Tancred, but his followers. He had preached to them with the eyes of flame and the

words of fire of a prophet; and they now asked of him, not a ransom, but a revelation. They wanted him to bring down from Sinai the new word of power, which would bind their scattered tribes into a mighty nation, with a divine mission for all the world.

What was this word to be? Tancred did not know any more than his followers, and he knelt all day long under the Arabian sun, waiting for the divine revelation. The sunlight faded, and the shadows fell around him, and he still remained bowed in a strange, quiet ecstasy of expectation. But at last, lifting up his eyes to the clear, starry sky of Arabia, he prayed:

"O Lord God of Israel, I come to Thine ancient dwelling-place to pour forth the heart of tortured Europe. Why does no impulse from Thy renovating will strike again into the soul of man? Faith fades and duty dies, and a profound melancholy falls upon the world. Our kings cannot rule, our priests doubt, and our multitudes toil and moan, and call in their madness upon unknown gods. If this transfigured mount may not again behold Thee, if Thou wilt not again descend to teach and console us, send, oh send, one of the starry messengers that guard Thy throne, to save Thy creatures from their terrible despair!"

As he prayed all the stars of Arabia grew strangely dim. The wild peaks of Sinai, standing sharp and black in the lucid, purple air, melted into shadowy, changing masses. The huge branches of the cypress-tree moved mysteriously above his head, and he fell upon the earth senseless and in a trance.

It seemed to Tancred that a mighty form was bending over him with a countenance like an oriental night, dark yet lustrous, mystical yet clear. The solemn eyes of the shadowy apparition were full of the brightness and energy of youth and the calm wisdom of the ages.

"I am the Angel of Arabia," said the spectral figure, waving a sceptre fashioned like a palm-tree, "the guard-

ian spirit of the land which governs the world; for its power lies neither in the sword nor in the shield, for these pass away, but in ideas which are divine. All the thoughts of every nation come from a higher power than man, but the thoughts of Arabia come directly from the Most High. You want a new revelation to Christendom? Listen to the ancient message of Arabia!

"Your people now hanker after other gods than the God of Sinai and Calvary. But the eternal principles of that Arabian faith, which moulded them from savages into civilised men when they descended from their northern forests fifteen hundred years ago, and spread all over the world, can alone breathe new vigour into them, now that they are decaying in the dust and fever of their great cities. Tell them that they must cease from seeking in their vain philosophies for the solution of their social problems. Their longing for the brotherhood of mankind can only be satisfied when they acknowledge the sway of a common father. Tell them that they are the children of God. Announce the sublime and solacing doctrine of theocratic equality. Fear not, falter not. Obey the impulse of thine own spirit, and find a ready instrument in every human being."

A sound as of thunder roused Tancred from his trance. Above him the mountains rose sharp and black in the clear purple air, and the Arabian stars shone with undimmed brightness; but the voice of the angel still lingered in his ear. He went down the mountain; at its base he found his followers sleeping amid their camels. He aroused Fakredeen, and told him that he had received the word which would bind together the warring nations of Arabia and Palestine, and reshape the earth.

IV.—The Mystic Queen

"It has been a great day," said Tancred to Fakredeen, as they were sitting some months afterwards in the

castle of the young emir of Lebanon, where all the princes of Syria had assembled to discuss the foundation of the new empire. "If your friends will only work together as they promise, Syria is ours."

"Even Lebanon," said Fakredeen, "can send forth more than fifty thousand well-armed footmen, and Amalek is gathering all the horsemen of the desert, from Petræa to Yemen, under our banner. If we can only win over the Ansarey," he continued, "we shall have all Syria and Arabia as a base for our operations."

"The Ansarey?" exclaimed Tancred. "They hold the mountains around Antioch, which are the key of Palestine, don't they? What is their religion? Do you think that the doctrine of theocratic equality would appeal to them as it did to the Arabians?"

"I don't know," said the emir. "They never allow strangers to enter their country. They are a very ancient people, and they fight so well in their mountains that even the Turks have not been able to conquer them."

"But can't we make overtures?" said Tancred.

"That is what I have done," said Fakredeen. "The Queen of the Ansarey has heard about you, and I have arranged that we should go and see her as soon as the Syrian assembly was over. Everything is ready for our journey, so, if you like, we will start at once."

It was a difficult expedition, as the Queen of the Ansarey was then waging war on the Turkish pasha of Aleppo. Happily, the travellers came upon a band of Ansareys who were raiding the Turkish province, and were led by them through their black ravines to the fortress palace of the queen.

She received them, sitting on her divan, clothed in a purple robe, and shrouded in a long veil. This she took off when Tancred came towards her, and he marvelled at the strangeness of her beauty. There was nothing

oriental about her. She was a Greek girl of the ancient type, with violet eyes, fair cheeks, and dark hair.

"Prince," she said, "we are a people who wish neither to see nor to be seen. We do not care what goes on in the world around. Our mountains are wild and barren, but while Apollo dwells among us, we do not care for gold, or silk, or jewels."

"Apollo!" cried Tancred. "Are the gods of Olympus still worshipped on earth?"

"Yes, Apollo still lives among us, and another greater than Apollo," said the young queen, looking at Tancred long and earnestly. "Follow me, and you shall now behold the secret of the Ansarey."

Her maidens adorned her with a garland of roses, and put a garland on the head of Tancred, and she led him through a portal of bronze, down an underground passage, into an Ionic temple, filled with the white and lovely forms of the gods of ancient Greece.

"Do you know this?" said the queen to Tancred, looking at a statue in golden ivory, and then at the young Englishman, whose clear-cut features and hyacinthine locks curiously resembled those of the carven image.

"It is Phœbus Apollo," said Tancred, and, moved by admiration at the beauty of the figure, he murmured some lines of Homer.

"Ah, you know all!" cried the queen. "You know our secret language. Yes, this is Phœbus Apollo. He used to stand in Antioch in the ancient days before the Christians drove us into the mountains. And look," she said, pointing to the statue beside Apollo, "here is the Syrian goddess before whom the pilgrims of the world once knelt. She is named Astarte, and I am called after her."

"Oh, angels watch over me!" said Tancred to himself as Queen Astarte fixed her violet eyes upon him with a glance of love that could not be mistaken, and led him back into the hall of audience.

There he saw Fakredeen bending over a maiden with a flower-like face, and large, dark, lustrous eyes.

"She is my foster-sister, Eva," said Fakredeen. "The Ansareys captured her on the plain of Aleppo."

Tancred had met Eva at the house of Besso in Jerusalem, but she did not then exercise over him the strange charm which now drew him to her side. It seemed to him that the beautiful Jewish girl had been sent to help him in his struggle against the heathen spells of Astarte. As he was meditating how he could rescue her, a messenger came in, and announced that the pasha of Aleppo had invaded the mountains at the head of 5,000 troops.

"Ah!" cried Astarte. "Few of them will ever see Aleppo again. I have 25,000 men under arms, and you, my prince," she said, turning to Tancred, "shall command them."

Tancred had learnt something of the arts of mountain warfare from Sheikh Amalek. He allowed the Turkish troops to penetrate into the heart of the wild hills, and then, as they were marching down a long defile, he attacked them from the crests above, shooting them down like sheep and burying them in avalanches of rolling rock. Instead of returning to the fortress palace, he sent his men on ahead, and rode out alone into the desert, and went through the Syrian wilderness back to Jerusalem.

Riding up to the door of Besso's house by Sion gate, he asked if there were any news of Eva. A negro led him into a garden, and there, sitting by the side of a fountain, was the lovely Jewish maiden.

"So Fakredeen brought you safely away, Eva," he said tenderly. "I was afraid that Astarte meant to harm you."

"She would have killed me," said Eva, "if she could. I am afraid that your faith in your idea of theocratic equality has been destroyed by the Ansareys. How can

you build up an empire in a land divided by so many jarring creeds? Do you still believe in Arabia?"

"I believe in Arabia," cried Tancred, kneeling down at her feet, "because I believe in you. You are the angel of Arabia, and the angel of my life. You cannot guess what influence you have had on my fate. You came into my life like another messenger from God. Thanks to you, my faith has never faltered. Will you not share it, dearest?"

He clasped her hand, and gazed with passionate adoration into her face. As her head fell upon his shoulder, the negro came running to the fountain.

"The Duke of Bellamont!" he said to Tancred.

Tancred looked up, and saw the Duke of Bellamont coming through the pomegranate trees of the garden.

"Father," he said, advancing towards the duke, "I have found my mission in life, and I am going to marry this lady."

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

Marguerite de Valois

I.—Henry of Navarre and Marguerite

On Monday, August 18, 1572, a great festival was held in the palace of the Louvre. It was to celebrate the marriage of Henry of Navarre and Marguerite de Valois, a marriage that perplexed a good many people, and alarmed others.

For Henry de Bourbon, King of Navarre, was the leader of the Huguenot party, and Marguerite was the daughter of Catherine de Medici, and the sister of the king, Charles IX., and this alliance between a Protestant and a Catholic, it seemed, was to end the strife that rent the nation. The king, too, had set his heart on this marriage, and the Huguenots were somewhat reassured by the king's declaration that Catholic and Huguenot alike were now his subjects, and were equally

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Alexandre Dumas, *père* (to distinguish him from his son of the same name), early became known as a talented writer, and especially as a poet and dramatist. His first published work appeared in 1823; then came volumes of poems in 1825, 1826, and the drama of "Henry III." in 1828. In "Marguerite de Valois," published in 1845, the first of the "Valois" series of historical romances, Dumas takes us back from the days of Richelieu and the "Three Musketeers" to the preceding century and the early struggles of Catholic and Huguenot. It was a stirring time in France, full of horrors and bloodshed, plots and intrigues, when Marguerite de Valois married Henry of Navarre, and Alexandre Dumas gives us, in his wonderfully vivid and attractive style, a great picture of the French court in the time of Charles IX. Little affection existed between Henry and his bride, but strong ties of interest and ambition bound them together, and for a long time they both adhered loyally to the treaty of political alliance they had drawn up for their mutual advantage. Dumas died on December 5, 1870, after experiencing many changes of fortune. His son also won considerable reputation as a dramatist and novelist.

beloved by him. Still, there were many on both sides who feared and distrusted the alliance.

At midnight, six days later, on August 24, the tocsin sounded, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew began.

The marriage, indeed, was in no sense a love match; but Henry succeeded at once in making Marguerite his friend, for he was alive to the dangers that surrounded him.

"Madame," he said, presenting himself at Marguerite's rooms on the night of the wedding festival, "whatever many persons may have said, I think our marriage is a good marriage. I stand well with you—you stand well with me. Therefore, we ought to act towards each other like good allies, since to-day we have been allied in the sight of God! Don't you think so?"

"Without question, sir!"

"I know, madame, that the ground at court is full of dangerous abysses; and I know that, though I am young and have never injured any person, I have many enemies. The king hates me, his brothers, the Duke of Anjou and the Duke d'Alençon, hate me. Catherine de Medici hated my mother too much not to hate me. Well, against these menaces, which must soon become attacks, I can only defend myself by your aid, for you are beloved by all those who hate me!"

"I?" said Marguerite.

"Yes, you!" replied Henry. "And if you will—I do not say love me—but if you will be my ally I can brave anything; while, if you become my enemy, I am lost."

"Your enemy! Never, sir!" exclaimed Marguerite.

"And my ally."

"Most decidedly!"

And Marguerite turned round and presented her hand to the king. "It is agreed," she said.

"Political alliance, frank and loyal?" asked Henry.

"Frank and loyal," was the answer.

At the door Henry turned and said softly, "Thanks, Marguerite; thanks! You are a true daughter of France. Lacking your love, your friendship will not fail me. I rely on you, as you, for your part, may rely on me. Adieu, madame."

He kissed his wife's hand; and then, with a quick step, the king went down the corridor to his own apartment. "I have more need of fidelity in politics than in love," he said to himself.

If on both sides there was little attempt at fidelity in love, there was an honourable alliance, which was maintained unbroken and saved the life of Henry of Navarre from his enemies on more than one occasion.

On the day of the St. Bartholomew massacre, while the Huguenots were being murdered throughout Paris, Charles IX., instigated by his mother, summoned Henry of Navarre to the royal armoury, and called upon him to turn Catholic or die.

"Will you kill me, sire—me, your brother-in-law?" exclaimed Henry.

Charles IX. turned away to the open window. "I must kill someone," he cried, and firing his arquebuse, struck a man who was passing.

Then, animated by a murderous fury, Charles loaded and fired his arquebuse without stopping, shouting with joy when his aim was successful.

"It's all over with me!" said Henry to himself. "When he sees no one else to kill, he will kill me!"

Catherine de Medici entered as the king fired his last shot. "Is it done?" she said, anxiously.

"No," the king exclaimed, throwing his arquebuse on the floor. "No; the obstinate blockhead will not consent!"

Catherine gave a glance at Henry which Charles understood perfectly, and which said, "Why, then, is he alive?"

"He lives," said the king, "because he is my relative."

Henry felt that it was with Catherine he had to contend.

"Madame," he said, addressing her, "I can see quite clearly that all this comes from you and not from brother-in-law Charles. It was you who planned this massacre to ensnare me into a trap which was to destroy us all. It was you who made your daughter the bait. It has been you who have separated me now from my wife, that she might not see me killed before her eyes!"

"Yes; but that shall not be!" cried another voice; and Marguerite, breathless and impassioned, burst into the room.

"Sir," said Marguerite to Henry, "your last words were an accusation, and were both right and wrong. They have made me the means for attempting to destroy you, but I was ignorant that in marrying me you were going to destruction. I myself owe my life to chance, for this very night they all but killed me in seeking you. Directly I knew of your danger I sought you. If you are exiled, sir, I will be exiled too; if they imprison you they shall imprison me also; if they kill you, I will also die!"

She gave her hand to her husband and he seized it eagerly.

"Brother," cried Marguerite to Charles IX., "remember, you made him my husband!"

"Faith, Margot is right, and Henry is my brother-in-law," said the king.

II.—The Boar Hunt

As time went on, if Catherine's hatred of Henry of Navarre did not diminish, Charles IX. certainly became more friendly.

Catherine was for ever intriguing and plotting for the fortune of her sons and the downfall of her son-in-law, but Henry always managed to evade the webs she

wove. At a certain boar-hunt Charles was indebted to Henry for his life.

It was at the time when the king's brother D'Anjou had accepted the crown of Poland, and the second brother, D'Alençon, a weak-minded, ambitious man, was secretly hoping for a crown somewhere, that Henry paid his debt for the king's mercy to him on the night of St. Bartholomew.

Charles was an intrepid hunter, but the boar had swerved as the king's spear was aimed at him, and, maddened with rage, the animal had rushed at him. Charles tried to draw his hunting-knife but the sheath was so tight it was impossible.

"The boar! the boar!" shouted the king. "Help, D'Alençon, help!"

D'Alençon was ghastly white as he placed his arquebuse to his shoulder and fired. The ball, instead of hitting the boar, felled the king's horse.

"I think," D'Alençon murmured to himself, "that D'Anjou is King of France, and I King of Poland."

The boar's tusk had indeed grazed the king's thigh when a hand in an iron glove dashed itself against the mouth of the beast, and a knife was plunged into its shoulder.

Charles rose with difficulty, and seemed for a moment as if about to fall by the dead boar. Then he looked at Henry of Navarre, and for the first time in four-and-twenty years his heart was touched.

"Thanks, Harry!" he said. "D'Alençon, for a first-rate marksman you made a most curious shot."

On Marguerite coming up to congratulate the king and thank her husband, Charles added, "Margot, you may well thank him. But for him Henry III. would be King of France."

"Alas, madame," returned Henry, "M. D'Anjou, who is always my enemy, will now hate me more than ever; but everyone has to do what he can."

Had Charles IX. been killed, the Duke d'Anjou would have been King of France, and D'Alençon most probably King of Poland. Henry of Navarre would have gained nothing by this change of affairs.

Instead of Charles IX. who tolerated him, he would have had the Duke d'Anjou on the throne, who, being absolutely at one with his mother, Catherine, had sworn his death, and would have kept his oath.

These ideas were in his brain when the wild boar rushed on Charles, and like lightning he saw that his own existence was bound up with the life of Charles IX. But the king knew nothing of the spring and motive of the devotion which had saved his life, and on the following day he showed his gratitude to Henry by carrying him off from his apartments, and out of the Louvre. Catherine, in her fear lest Henry of Navarre should be some day King of France, had arranged the assassination of her son-in-law; and Charles, getting wind of this, warned him that the air of the Louvre was not good for him that night, and kept him in his company. Instead of Henry, it was one of his followers who was killed.

III.—The Poisoned Book

Once more Catherine resolved to destroy Henry. The Huguenots had plotted with D'Alençon that he should be King of Navarre, since Henry not only abjured Protestantism but remained in Paris, being kept there indeed by the will of Charles IX.

Catherine, aware of D'Alençon's scheme, assured her son that Henry was suffering from an incurable disease, and must be taken away from Paris when D'Alençon started for Navarre.

"Are you sure that Henry will die?" asked D'Alençon.

"The physician who gave me a certain book assured me of it."

"And where is this book? What is it?"

Catherine brought the book from her cabinet.

"Here it is. It is a treatise on the art of rearing and training falcons by an Italian. Give it to Henry, who is going hawking with the king to-day, and will not fail to read it."

"I dare not!" said D'Alençon, shuddering.

"Nonsense!" replied Catherine. "It is a book like any other, only the leaves have a way of sticking together. Don't attempt to read it yourself, for you will have to wet the finger in turning over each leaf, which takes up so much time."

"Oh," said D'Alençon, "Henry is with the court! Give me the book, and while he is away I will put it in his room."

D'Alençon's hand was trembling as he took the book from the queen-mother, and with some hesitation and fear he entered Henry's apartment and placed the volume, open at the title-page.

But it was not Henry, but Charles, seeking his brother-in-law, who found the book and carried it off to his own room. D'Alençon found the king reading.

"By heavens, this is an admirable book!" cried Charles. "Only it seems as if they had stuck the leaves together on purpose to conceal the wonders it contains."

D'Alençon's first thought was to snatch the book from his brother, but he hesitated.

The king again moistened his finger and turned over a page. "Let me finish this chapter," he said, "and then tell me what you please. I have already read fifty pages."

"He must have tasted the poison five-and-twenty times," thought D'Alençon. "He is a dead man!"

The poison did its deadly work. Charles was taken ill while out hunting, and returned to find his dog dead, and in its mouth pieces of paper from the precious book

on falconry. The king turned pale. The book was poisoned! Many things flashed across his memory, and he knew his life was doomed.

Charles summoned René, a Florentine, the court perfumer to Catherine de Medici, to his presence, and bade him examine the dog.

"Sire," said René, after a close investigation, "the dog has been poisoned by arsenic."

"He has eaten a leaf of this book," said Charles; "and if you do not tell me whose book it is I will have your flesh torn from your bones by red-hot pincers."

"Sire," stammered the Florentine, "this book belongs to me!"

"And how did it leave your hands?"

"Her majesty the queen-mother took it from my house."

"Why did she do that?"

"I believe she intended sending it to the King of Navarre, who had asked for a book on hawking."

"Ah," said Charles, "I understand it all! The book was in Harry's room. It is destiny; I must yield to it. Tell me," he went on, turning to René, "this poison does not always kill at once?"

"No, sire; but it kills surely. It is a matter of time."

"Is there no remedy?"

"None, sire, unless it be instantly administered."

Charles compelled the wretched man to write in the fatal volume, "This book was given by me to the queen-mother, Catherine de Medici.—René," and then dismissed him.

Henry, at his own prayer and for his personal safety, was confined in the prison of Vincennes by the king's order. Charles grew worse, and the physicians discussed his malady without daring to guess at the truth.

Then Catherine came one day and explained to the king the cause of his disease.

"Listen, my son; you believe in magic?"

"Oh, fully," said Charles, repressing his smile of incredulity.

"Well," continued Catherine, "all your sufferings proceed from magic. An enemy afraid to attack you openly has done so in secret; a terrible conspiracy has been directed against your majesty. You doubt it, perhaps, but I know it for a certainty."

"I never doubt what you tell me," replied the king sarcastically. "I am curious to know how they have sought to kill me."

"By magic. Look here." The queen drew from under her mantle a figure of yellow wax about ten inches high, wearing a robe covered with golden stars, and over this a royal mantle.

"See, it has on its head a crown," said Catherine, "and there is a needle in its heart. Now do you recognise yourself?"

"Myself?"

"Yes, in your royal robes, with the crown on your head."

"And who made this figure?" asked the king, weary of the wretched farce. "The King of Navarre, of course!"

"No, sire; he did not actually make it, but it was found in the rooms of M. de la Mole, who serves the King of Navarre."

"So, then, the person who seeks to kill me is M. de la Mole?" said Charles.

"He is only the instrument, and behind the instrument is the hand that directs it," replied Catherine.

"This, then, is the cause of my illness. And now what must I do—for I know nothing of sorcery?"

"The death of the conspirator destroys the charm. Its power ends with his life. You are convinced now, are you not, of the cause of your illness?"

"Oh, certainly," Charles answered ironically. "And

I am to punish M. de la Mole, as you say he is the guilty party?"

"I say he is the instrument, and," muttered Catherine, "we have infallible means for making him confess the name of his principal."

Catherine left hurriedly without understanding the sardonic laughter of the king, and as she went out Marguerite appeared.

"Oh, sire—sire," cried Marguerite, "you know what *she* says is false. It is terrible to accuse anyone's own mother, but she only lives to persecute the man who is devoted to you, Henry—your Henry—and I swear to you that what she says is false!"

"I think so, too, Margot. But Henry is safe. Safer in disgrace in Vincennes than in favour at the Louvre."

"Oh, thanks, thanks! But there is another person in whose welfare I am interested, whom I hardly dare mention to my brother, much less to my king."

"M. de la Mole, is it not? But do you know that a figure dressed in royal robes and pierced to the heart was found in his rooms?"

"I know it; but it was the figure of a woman, not of a man."

"And the needle?"

"Was a charm not to kill a man, but to make a woman love him."

"What was the name of this woman?"

"Marguerite!" cried the queen, throwing herself down and bathing the king's hand in her tears.

"Margot, what if I know the real author of the crime? For a crime has been committed, and I have not three months to live. I am poisoned, but it must be thought I die by magic."

"You know who is guilty?"

"Yes; but it must be kept from the world, and so it must be believed I die of magic, and by the agency of him they accuse."

"But it is monstrous!" exclaimed Marguerite. "You know he is innocent. Pardon him—pardon him!"

"I know it, but the world must believe him guilty. Let your friend die. His death alone can save the honour of our family. I am dying that the secret may be preserved."

M. de la Mole, after enduring excruciating tortures at the hand of Catherine, without making any admissions, died on the scaffold.

IV.—"The Bourbon Shall Not Reign!"

Before he died Charles showed Catherine the poisoned book, which he had kept under lock and key.

"And now burn it, madame. I read this book too much, so fond was I of the chase. And the world must not know the weaknesses of kings. When it is burnt, please summon my brother Henry. I wish to speak to him about the regency."

Catherine brought Henry of Navarre to the king, and warned him that if he accepted the regency he was a dead man.

Charles, however, though on his deathbed, declared Henry should be regent.

"Madame," he said, addressing his mother, "if I had a son he would be king, and you would be regent. In your stead, did you decline, the King of Poland would be regent; and in his stead, D'Alençon. But I have no son, and therefore the throne belongs to D'Anjou, who is absent. To make D'Alençon regent is to invite civil war. I have therefore chosen the fittest person for regent. Salute him, madame; salute him, D'Alençon. It is the King of Navarre!"

"Never," cried Catherine, "shall my race yield to a foreign one! Never shall a Bourbon reign while a Valois lives!"

She left the room, followed by D'Alençon.

"Henry," said Charles, "after my death you will be great and powerful. D'Anjou will not leave Poland—they will not let him. D'Alençon is a traitor. You alone are capable of governing. It is not the regency only, but the throne I give you."

A stream of blood choked his speech.

"The fatal moment is come," said Henry. "Am I to reign, or to live?"

"Live, sire!" a voice answered, and René appeared. "The queen has sent me to ruin you, but I have faith in your star. It is foretold that you shall be king. Do you know that the King of Poland will be here very soon? He has been summoned by the queen. A messenger has come from Warsaw. You shall be king, but not yet."

"What shall I do, then?"

"Fly instantly to where your friends wait for you."

Henry stooped and kissed his brother's forehead, then disappeared down a secret passage, passed through the postern, and, springing on his horse, galloped off.

"He flies! The King of Navarre flies!" cried the sentinels.

"Fire on him! Fire!" said the queen.

The sentinels levelled their pieces, but the king was out of reach.

"He flies!" muttered D'Alençon. "I am king, then!"

At the same moment the drawbridge was hastily lowered, and Henry d'Anjou galloped into the court, followed by four knights, crying, "France! France!"

"My son!" cried Catherine joyfully.

"Am I too late?" said D'Anjou.

"No. You are just in time. Listen!"

The captain of the king's guards appeared at the balcony of the king's apartment. He broke the wand he held in two places, and holding a piece in either hand, called out three times, "King Charles the Ninth is dead!

King Charles the Ninth is dead! King Charles the Ninth is dead!"

"Charles the Ninth is dead!" said Catherine, crossing herself. "God save Henry the Third!"

All repeated the cry.

"I have conquered," said Catherine, "and the odious Bourbon shall not reign!"

The Black Tulip

I.—Mob Vengeance

On the 20th of August, 1672, the city of The Hague was crowded in every street with a mob of people, all armed with knives, muskets, or sticks, and all hurrying towards the Buytenhof.

Within that terrible prison was Cornelius de Witt, brother of John de Witt, the ex-Grand Pensionary of Holland.

These brothers De Witt had long served the United Provinces of the Dutch Republic, and the people had

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"The Black Tulip," published in 1850, was the last of Alexandre Dumas' more famous stories, and ranks deservedly high among the short novels of its prolific author. Dumas visited Holland in May, 1849, in order to be present at the coronation of William III. at Amsterdam, and according to Flotow, the composer, it was the king himself who told Dumas the story of "The Black Tulip," and mentioned that none of the author's romances were concerned with the Dutch. Dumas, however, never gave any credit to this anecdote, and others have alleged that Paul Lacroix, the bibliophile, who was assisting Dumas with his novels at that time, is responsible for the plot. The question can never be answered, for who can disentangle the work of Dumas from that of his army of helpers? A feature of "The Black Tulip" is that in it is the bulb, and not a human being, that is the real centre of interest. The fate of the bulb is made of first importance, and the fortunes of Cornelius van Baerle, the tulip fancier, of Boxtel, and of Rosa, the gaoler's daughter, exciting though they are, take second place.

grown tired of the Republic, and wanted William, Prince of Orange, for Stadtholder. John de Witt had signed the Act re-establishing the Stadtholderate, but Cornelius had only signed it under the compulsion of an Orange mob that attacked his house at Dordrecht.

This was the first count against the De Witts—their objection to a Stadtholder. The second count was that the De Witts had always done their best to keep at peace with France. They knew that war with France meant ruin to Holland, but the more violent Orangists still believed that such a war would bring honour to the Dutch.

Hence the popular hatred against the De Witts. A miscreant named Tyckelaer fanned the flame against Cornelius by declaring that he had bribed him to assassinate William, the newly-elected Stadtholder.

Cornelius was arrested, brought to trial, and tortured on the rack, but no confession of guilt could be wrung from the innocent, high-souled man. Then the judges acquitted Tyckelaer, deprived Cornelius of all his offices, and passed sentence of banishment. John de Witt had already resigned the office of Grand Pensionary.

On the 20th of August, Cornelius was to leave his prison for exile, and a fierce Orangist populace, incited to violence by the harangues of Tyckelaer, was rushing to the Buytenhof prepared to do murder, and fearful lest the prisoner should escape alive. "To the gaol! To the gaol!" yelled the mob. But outside the prison was a line of cavalry drawn up under the command of Captain Tilly with orders to guard the Buytenhof, and while the populace stood in hesitation, not daring to attack the soldiers, John de Witt had quietly driven up to the prison, and had been admitted by the gaoler.

The shouts and clamour of the people could be heard within the prison as John de Witt, accompanied by Gryphus the gaoler, made his way to his brother's cell.

Cornelius learnt there was no time to be lost, but

there was a question of certain correspondence between John de Witt and M. de Louvois of France to be discussed. These letters, entirely creditable though they were to the statesmanship of the Grand Pensionary, would have been accepted as evidence of treason by the maddened Orangists, and Cornelius, instead of burning them, had left them in the keeping of his godson, Van Baerle, a quiet, scholarly young man of Dordrecht, who was utterly unaware of the nature of the packet.

"They will kill us if these papers are found," said John de Witt, and opening the window, they heard the mob shouting, "Death to traitors!"

In spite of fingers and wrists broken by the rack, Cornelius managed to write a note.

DEAR GODSON: Burn the packet I gave you, burn without opening or looking at it, so that you may not know the contents. The secrets it contains bring death. Burn it, and you will have saved both John and Cornelius.

Farewell, from your affectionate

CORNELIUS DE WITT.

Then a letter was given to Craeke, John de Witt's faithful servant, who at once set off for Dordrecht, and within a few minutes the two brothers were driving away to the city gate. Rosa, the gaoler's daughter, unknown to her father, had opened the postern, and had herself bidden De Witt's coachman drive round to the rear of the prison, and by this means the fury of the mob was, for the moment, evaded.

And now the clamour of the Orangists was at the prison door, for Tilly's horse had withdrawn on an order signed by the deputies in the town hall, and the people were raging to get within the Buytenhof.

The mob burst open the great gate, and yelling, "Death to the traitors! To the gallows with Cornelius de Witt!" poured in, only to find the prisoner had escaped. But the escape was but from the prison, for the city gate was locked when the carriage of the De Witts

drove up, locked by order of the deputies of the Town Hall, and a certain young man—who was none other than William, Prince of Orange—held the key.

Before another gate could be reached the mob, streaming from the Buytenhof, had overtaken the carriage, and the De Witts were at its mercy.

The two men, whose lives had been spent in the welfare of their country, were massacred with unspeakable savagery, and their bodies, stripped, and hacked almost beyond recognition, were then strung up on a hastily erected gibbet in the market-place.

When the worst had been done, the young man, who had secretly watched the proceedings from the window of a neighbouring house, returned the key to the gatekeeper.

Then the prince mounted a horse which an equerry held in waiting for him, and galloped off to camp to await the message of the States. He galloped proudly, for the burghers of The Hague had made of the corpses of the De Witts a stepping stone to power for William of Orange.

II.—Betrayed for his Bulbs

Doctor Cornelius van Baerle, the godson of Cornelius de Witt, was in his twenty-eighth year, an orphan, but nevertheless, a really happy man. His father had amassed a fortune of 400,000 guilders in trade with the Indies, and an estate brought him in 10,000 guilders a year. He was blessed with the love of a peaceful life with good nerves, ample wealth, and a philosophic mind.

Left alone in the big house at Dordrecht, he steadily resisted all temptations to public life. He took up the study of botany, and then, not knowing what to do with his time and money, decided to go in for one of the most extravagant hobbies of the time—the cultivation of his favourite flower, the tulip. The fame of Mynheer van Baerle's tulips soon spread in the district, and while Cor-

nelius de Witt had roused deadly hatred by sowing the seeds of political passion, Van Baerle with his tulips won general goodwill. Yet, all unknowingly, Van Baerle had made an enemy, an implacable, relentless enemy. This was his neighbour, Isaac Boxtel, who lived next door to him in Dordrecht.

Boxtel, from childhood, had been a passionate tulip-grower. He had even produced a tulip of his own, and the Boxtel had won wide admiration. One day, to his horror, Boxtel discovered that his next-door neighbour, the wealthy Mynheer van Baerle, was also a tulip-grower. In bitter anguish Boxtel foresaw that he had a rival who, with all the resources at his command, might equal and possibly surpass the famous Boxtel creations. He almost choked with envy, and from the moment of his discovery lived under continual fear. The healthy pastime of tulip growing became, under these conditions, a morbid and evil occupation for Boxtel, while Van Baerle, on the other hand, totally unaware of the enmity brewing, threw himself into the business with the keenest zest, taking for his motto the old aphorism, "To despise flowers is to insult God."

So fierce was the envy that seized Boxtel that though he would have shrunk from the infamy of destroying a tulip, he would have killed the man who grew them. His own plants were neglected; it was useless and hopeless to contend against so wealthy a rival. Then Boxtel, fascinated by his evil passion, bought a telescope, and, perched on a ladder, studied Van Baerle's tulip beds and the drying-room, the tulip-grower's sacred place.

One night he lost all moral control, and tying the hind legs of two cats together with a piece of string, he flung the animals into Van Baerle's garden. To Boxtel's bitter mortification the cats, though they made havoc of many precious plants before they broke the string, left the four finest tulips untouched.

Shortly afterwards the Haarlem Tulip Society offered

a prize of 100,000 guilders to whomsoever should produce a large black tulip, without spot or blemish. Van Baerle at once thought out the idea of the black tulip. He had already achieved a dark brown one, while Boxtel, who had only managed to produce a light brown one, gave up the quest as impossible, and could do nothing but spy on his neighbour's activities.

One evening in January 1672, Cornelius de Witt came to see his grandson, Cornelius van Baerle, and went with him alone into the sacred drying-room, the laboratory of the tulip-grower. Boxtel, with his telescope, recognised the well-known features of the statesman, and presently he saw him hand his godson a packet, which the latter put carefully away in a cabinet. This packet contained the correspondence of John de Witt and M. de Louvois.

Cornelius drove away, and Boxtel wondered what the packet contained. It could hardly be bulbs; it must be secret papers.

It was not till August, as we know, that Craeke was despatched to Van Baerle with the note bidding him destroy the packet.

Craeke arrived just when Van Baerle was nursing his precious bulbs—the bulbs of the black tulip—and his sudden entrance rudely disturbed the tulip-grower. He had not time to read the note; indeed, he was too much concerned with the welfare of his three particular bulbs to trouble about it, before a magistrate and some soldiers entered to arrest him. Van Baerle wrapped up the bulbs in the note from his godfather, and was sent off under close custody to The Hague. The magistrate carried off the packet from the cabinet.

All this was Boxtel's work. It was he who had reported to the magistrate the visit of De Witt and the placing of the packet in a cabinet. And now, with Van Baerle out of the house as a prisoner, Boxtel in the dead of night broke into his neighbour's house, to secure the

priceless bulbs of the black tulip. He had made out where they were growing, and he plunged his hands into the soft soil—only to find nothing. Then the wretched man guessed that the bulbs had gone with the prisoner to The Hague, and decided to go in pursuit. Van Baerle could only keep them while he was alive, and then—they should be his, Isaac Boxtel's.

III.—The Theft of the Tulip

Van Baerle was placed in the cell occupied by Cornelius de Witt in the Buytenhof. Outside, in the market-place, the bodies of the De Witts were hanging, and Van Baerle read with horror the inscription, "Here hang that great rascal John de Witt and the little rascal Cornelius de Witt, enemies of their country."

Gryphus laughed when the prisoner asked him what it meant, and replied, "That's what happens to those that write secret letters to the enemies of the Prince of Orange."

A terrible despair fell on Van Baerle, but he refused to escape when Rosa, the gaoler's beautiful daughter, suggested it to him. He was brought to trial, and though he denied all knowledge of the correspondence, his goods were confiscated, and he was condemned to death. He bequeathed his three tulip bulbs to Rosa, explained how she must get a certain soil from Dordrecht, and went out calmly to die. On the scaffold Van Baerle was reprieved and sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, for the Prince of Orange shrank from further bloodshed.

One spectator in the crowd was bitterly disappointed. This was Boxtel, who had bribed the headsman to let him have Van Baerle's clothes, believing that he would thus obtain the priceless bulbs.

Van Baerle was sent to the prison of Loewenstein, and in February 1673, when he was thinking his tulips lost

for ever, he heard Rosa's voice. Gryphus had applied for the gaolership of Loewenstein, and had been appointed.

Nothing could persuade him that if Van Baerle was not a traitor he was certainly in league with the devil, like all learned men, and he did all he could to mortify and annoy his prisoner. But Rosa would come every night when her father, stupefied by gin, was asleep, and talk to Cornelius through the barred grating of his cell door.

He taught her to read, and together they planned how the tulip bulbs should be brought to flower. One bulb Rosa was to plant, the second Van Baerle would cultivate in his cell with soil placed in an old water jug, and the third was to be kept in reserve.

Once more hope revived in Baerle's mind, but Rosa often suffered vexation because Cornelius thought more of his black tulip than of her.

In the meantime Boxtel, under the assumed name of Jacob Gisels, had made his way to Loewenstein in pursuit of the bulbs, and had ingratiated himself with Gryphus, offering to marry his daughter. Rosa's tulip had to be guarded from Gisels, who was always spying on her movements. She kept it in her room for safety, but Boxtel had a key made, and the day the tulip flowered, and arose a spotless black, he resolved to take it at once, and rush to Haarlem and claim the prize.

The day came. Rosa described to Cornelius the wonderful black tulip, and they drew up a letter to the president of the Horticultural Society at Haarlem, begging him to come and fetch the wonderful flower.

That very night while Cornelius and Rosa rejoiced as lovers—for now even Rosa was convinced of the prisoner's love for her—over the happiness of the flowering tulip, Boxtel crept into her room, and carried off the black tulip to Haarlem.

As for Van Baerle, he was beside himself with the

rage of desperation when Rosa told him that the black tulip had been stolen. Rosa, bent on recovering the tulip, and certain in her own mind as to the thief, hastened away from Loewenstein the next day without a word, Gryphus was mad when he learnt his daughter was nowhere to be found, and put down the mysterious disappearance of Jacob Gisels and Rosa to the work of the devil, and was convinced that Van Baerle was the devil's agent.

The third day after the theft Gryphus, armed with a stick and a knife, attacked Cornelius, calling out, "Give me back my daughter." Cornelius got hold of the stick, forced Gryphus to drop the knife, and then proceeded to give the gaoler a thrashing. The noise brought in turnkeys and guards, who speedily carried off the wounded gaoler and arrested Van Baerle. To comfort the prisoner they assured him he would certainly be shot within twelve hours.

Then an officer, an aide-de camp of the Prince of Orange, entered, escorted Van Baerle to the prison gate, and bade him enter a carriage. Believing himself about to die, he thought sadly of Rosa and of the tulip he was never to see again. The carriage rolled off, and they travelled all that day and night until the journey ended at Haarlem.

IV.—The Triumph of the Tulip

Rosa reached Haarlem just four hours after Boxtel's arrival, and she went at once to seek an interview with Mynheer van Systens, the President of the Horticultural Society. Immediate admittance was granted on her mentioning the magic words "black tulip."

"Sir, the black tulip has been stolen from me," said Rosa.

"But I only saw it two hours ago!" replied the president.

"You saw it—where?"

"Why, at your master's! Are you not in the service of Mynheer Isaac Boxtel?"

"I, sir? Certainly not! But this Isaac Boxtel, is he a thin, bald-headed, bow-legged, crook-backed, haggard-looking man?"

"You have described him exactly."

"He is the thief; he stole the black tulip from me."

"Well, go and find Mynheer Boxtel—he is at the White Swan Inn, and settle it with him." And with that the president took up his pen and went on writing, for he was busy over his report.

But Rosa still implored him, and while she was speaking the Prince of Orange entered the building. Rosa told everything, how she had received the bulb from the prisoner at Loewenstein, and how she had first seen the prisoner at The Hague. Then Boxtel was sent for. He was ready with his tale. The girl had plotted with her lover, the state prisoner, Cornelius van Baerle, and had stolen his—Boxtel's—black tulip, which he had unwisely mentioned. However, he had recovered it.

A thought struck Rosa.

"There were three bulbs. What has become of the others?" she asked.

"One failed, the second produced the black tulip, and the third is at home at Dordrecht," said Boxtel uneasily.

"You lie; it is here!" cried Rosa. And she drew from her bosom the third bulb, still wrapped in the same paper Van Baerle had so hastily put round the bulbs on his flight. "Take it, my lord," she said, handing it to the prince. And then, glancing at the paper for the first time, she added, "Oh, my lord, read this!"

William passed the third bulb to the president, and read the paper carefully. It was Cornelius de Witt's letter to his godson, exhorting him to burn the packet

without opening it. It was the proof of Van Baerle's innocence and of his ownership of the bulbs.

"Go, Mynheer Boxtel; you shall have justice. And you, Mynheer van Systens, take care of this maiden and of the tulip," said the prince.

That same evening the prince summoned Rosa to the town hall, and talked to her. Rosa did not deny her love for Cornelius.

"But what is the good of loving a man condemned to live and die in prison?" the prince asked.

"I can help him to live and die," came the answer.

The prince sealed a letter, and sent it off to Loewenstein by Colonel van Deken. Then he turned to Rosa, and said, "The day after to-morrow is Sunday, and it will be the festival of the tulip. Take these 500 guilders, and dress yourself in the costume of a Friesland bride, for I want it to be a grand festival for you."

Sunday came, May 15, 1673, and all Haarlem gathered to do honour to the black tulip. Boxtel was in the crowd, feasting his eyes on the sacred flower, which was born aloft in a litter. The procession stopped, and the flower was placed on a pedestal, while the people cheered with wild enthusiasm. At the solemn moment when the Prince of Orange was to acclaim the triumphant owner of the black tulip and present the prize of 100,000 guilders, the coach with the unhappy prisoner Cornelius van Baerle drew up in the market-place.

Cornelius, hearing that the celebration of the black tulip was actually proceeding, besought his guard to let him have one glimpse of the flower; and the petition was granted by the Prince of Orange.

From a distance of six paces Van Baerle gazed at the black tulip, and then he, with the multitude, turned his eyes towards the prince. In dead silence the prince declared the occasion of the festival, the discovery of the wonderful black tulip, and concluded, "Let the owner of the black tulip approach."

Cornelius made an involuntary movement. Boxtel and Rosa rushed forward from the crowd.

The prince turned to Rosa. "This tulip is yours, is it not?" he said.

"Yes, my lord," she answered softly. And general applause came from the crowd.

"This tulip will henceforth bear the name of its producer, and will be called *Tulipa nigra Rosa Baerllënsis,* because Van Baerle is to be the married name of this damsel," the prince announced; and at the same time he took Rosa's hand and placed it within the hand of the prisoner, who had rushed forward at the words he had heard.

Boxtel fell down in a fit, and when they raised him up he was dead.

The procession returned to the town hall, the prince declared Rosa the prizewinner, and informed Cornelius that, having been wrongfully condemned, his property was restored to him. Then he entered his coach, and was driven away.

Cornelius and Rosa departed for Dordrecht, and Van Baerle remained ever faithful to his wife and his tulips.

As for old Gryphus, after being the roughest gaoler of men, he lived to be the fiercest guardian of tulips at Dordrecht.

The Corsican Brothers

I.—The Twins

I WAS travelling in Corsica early in March 1841. Corsica is a French department, but it is by no means French, and Italian is the language commonly spoken. It is free

"The Corsican Brothers" is one of the most famous of Dumas' shorter stories. It was published in 1845, when the author was at the height of his powers, and is remarkable not only for its strong dramatic interest, but for its famous account of

from robbers, but it is still the land of the vendetta, and the province of Sartène, wherein I was travelling, is the home of family feuds, which last for years and are always accompanied by loss of life.

I was travelling alone across the island, but I had been obliged to take a guide; and when at five o'clock we halted on a hill overlooking the village of Sullacro, my guide asked me where I would like to stay for the night. There were, perhaps, one hundred and twenty houses in Sullacro for me to choose from, so after looking out carefully for the one that promised the most comfort, I decided in favour of a strong, fortified, squarely-built house.

"Certainly," said my guide. "That is the house of Madame Savilia de Franchi. Your honour has chosen wisely."

I was a little uncertain whether it was quite the right thing for me to seek hospitality at a house belonging to a lady, for, being only thirty-six, I considered myself a young man. But I found it quite impossible to make my guide understand my feelings. The notion that my staying a night could give occasion for gossip concerning my hostess, or that it made any difference whether I was old or young, was unintelligible to a Corsican.

Madame Savilia, I learnt from the guide, was about forty, and had two sons—twins—twenty-one years old. One lived with his mother, and was a Corsican; the other was in Paris, preparing to be a lawyer.

We soon arrived at the house we sought. My guide knocked vigorously at the door, which was promptly

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old Corsican manners and customs, being inspired by a visit to Corsica in 1834. The scenery of the island, and the life of the inhabitants, the survival of the vendetta, and the fierce family feuds, all made strong appeal to his imaginative mind. Several versions of the story have been dramatised for the English stage, and as a play "The Corsican Brothers" has enjoyed a long popularity; but Dumas himself, who was fond of adapting his works to the stage, never dramatised this story.

opened by a man in velvet waistcoat and breeches and leather gaiters. I explained that I sought hospitality, and was answered in return that the house was honoured by my request. My luggage was carried off, and I entered.

In the corridor a beautiful woman, tall, and dressed in black, met me. She bade me welcome, and promised me that of her son, telling me that the house was at my service.

A maid-servant was called to conduct me to the room of M. Louis, and as supper would be served in an hour, I went upstairs.

My room was evidently that of the absent son, and the most comfortable in the house. Its furniture was all modern, and there was a well-filled bookcase. I hastily looked at the volumes; they denoted a student of liberal mind.

A few minutes later, and my host, M. Lucien de Franchi, entered. I observed that he was young, of sunburnt complexion, well made, and fearless and resolute in his bearing.

"I am anxious to see that you have all you need," he said, "for we Corsicans are still savages, and this old hospitality, which is almost the only tradition of our forefathers left, has its shortcomings for the French."

I assured him that the apartment was far from suggesting savagery.

"My brother Louis likes to live after the French fashion," Lucien answered. He went on to speak of his brother, for whom he had a profound affection. They had already been parted for ten months, and it was three or four years before Louis was expected home.

As for Lucien, nothing, he said, would make him leave Corsica. He belonged to the island, and could not live without its torrents, its rocks, and its forests. The physical resemblance between himself and his brother, he told

me, was very great; but there was considerable difference of temperament.

Having completed my own change of dress, I went into Lucien's room, at his suggestion. It was a regular armoury, and all the furniture was at least 300 years old.

While my host put on the dress of a mountaineer, for he mentioned to me that he had to attend a meeting after supper, he told me the history of some of the carbines and daggers that hung round the room. Of a truth, he came of an utterly fearless stock, to whom death was of small account by the side of courage and honour.

At supper, Madame de Franchi could not help expressing her anxiety for her absent son. No letter had been received, but Lucien for days had been feeling wretched and depressed.

"We are twins," he said simply, "and however greatly we are separated, we have one and the same body, as we had at our birth. When anything happens to one of us, be it physical or mental, it at once affects the other. I know that Louis is not dead, for I should have seen him again in that case."

"You would have told me if he had come?" said Madame de Franchi anxiously.

"At the very moment, mother."

I was amazed. Neither of them seemed to express the slightest doubt or surprise at this extraordinary statement.

Lucien went on to regret the passing of the old customs of Corsica. His very brother had succumbed to the French spirit, and on his return would settle down as an advocate at Ajaccio, and probably prosecute men who killed their enemies in a vendetta. "And I, too, am engaged in affairs unworthy of a De Franchi," he concluded. "You have come to Corsica with curiosity about its inhabitants. If you care to set out with me after supper, I will show you a real bandit."

I accepted the invitation with pleasure.

II.—M. Lucien de Franchi

Lucien explained to me the object of our expedition. For ten years the village of Sullacro had been divided over the quarrel of two families, the Orlandi and the Colona—a quarrel that had originated in the seizure of a paltry hen belonging to the Orlandi, which had flown into the poultry-yard of the Colonas. Nine people had already been killed in this feud, and now Lucien, as arbitrator, was to bring it to an end. The local prefect had written to Paris that one word from De Franchi would end the dispute, and Louis had appealed to him.

To-night Lucien was to arrange matters with Orlandi, as he had already done with Colona, and the meeting-place was at the ruins of the Castle of Vicentello d'Istria. It was a steep ascent, but we arrived in good time, and while we sat and waited, Lucien told me terrible stories of feuds and vengeance. Orlandi made his appearance exactly at nine o'clock, and after some discussion agreed to Lucien's terms. I found that I was expected to act as surety for Orlandi, and accepted the responsibility.

"You will now be able to tell my brother, on your return to Paris, that it's all been settled as he wished," said Lucien.

On our way home Lucien showed wonderful marksmanship with his gun, and admitted he was equally skillful with the pistol. His brother Louis, on the other hand, had never touched either gun or pistol.

Next morning came the grand reconciliation of Orlandi and Colona, in the market square in the presence of the mayor and the notary. The mayor compelled the belligerents to shake hands, a document was signed declaring the vendetta at an end, and everybody went to mass.

Later in the day I was compelled to bid good-bye to Madame de Franchi and her son, and set out for Paris;

but before I left Lucien told me how in his family his father had appeared to him on his death-bed, and that, not only at death, but at any great crisis in life, an apparition appeared. He was certain by his own depression that his brother Louis was suffering.

Lucien told me his brother's address, 7, Rue du Helder, and gave me a letter which I undertook to deliver personally.

We parted with great cordiality, and a week later I was back in Paris.

III.—The Fate of Louis

I was startled by the extraordinary resemblance of M. Louis de Franchi, whom I had at once called upon, to his brother.

I was relieved to find that he was not suffering from illness, and I told him of the anxiety of his family concerning his health. M. de Franchi replied that he had not been ill, but that he had been suffering from a very bitter disappointment, aggravated by the knowledge that his own suffering caused his brother to suffer, too. He hoped, however, that time would heal the wound in his heart.

We agreed to meet the following night at the opera ball at midnight, on the young lawyer's suggestion. I rallied him on his recovery from his sorrow, but Louis only said mournfully that he was driven by fate, dragged against his will.

"I am quite sure," he said, "that it would be better for me not to go, but nevertheless I am going."

Louis was too pre-occupied to talk when we met at the masked ball, and he suddenly left me for a lady carrying violets. Later he rejoined me, and together we set off to supper at three o'clock in the morning. It was my friend D——'s supper party, and he had included Louis in the invitation.

We found our friends waiting supper, and D—— announced that the only person who had not arrived was Château-Renard. It seemed there was a wager on that M. de Château-Renard would not arrive with a certain lady whom he had undertaken to bring to supper.

Louis, who was as pale as death, implored D—— not to mention the lady's name, and our host acceded to the request.

"Only as her husband is at Smyrna, or in India or Mexico or somewhere, and in such a case it's the same as if the lady wasn't married," D—— observed.

"I assure you her husband is coming back soon, and he is such a good fellow he would be horribly mortified to hear his wife had done anything silly in his absence."

Château-Renard had till four o'clock to save his bet. At five minutes to four he had not arrived, and Louis smiled at me over his wine. At that very moment the bell rang. D—— went to the door, and we could hear some argument going on in the hall.

Then a lady entered with obvious reluctance, escorted by D—— and Château-Renard.

"It's not yet four," said Château-Renard to D——.

"Quite right, my boy," the other answered. "You've won your bet."

"No, hardly yet, sir," said the unknown lady. "Now I know why you were so persistent. You have wagered to bring me here to supper, and I supposed you were taking me to sup with one of my own friends."

Both Château-Renard and D—— besought the lady to stay, but the fair unknown, after expressing her thanks to D—— for his welcome, turned to M. Louis de Franchi, and asked him to escort her home. Louis at once sprang forward.

Château-Renard, furious, insisted that he would know whom to hold accountable.

"If I am the person meant," said Louis, with great

dignity, "you will find me at home at 7, Rue du Helder all day to-morrow."

Louis departed with his fair companion, and though Château-Renard was ostentatiously cheerful, the end of the supper-party was not at all a festive business.

At ten o'clock the same morning I arrived at the rooms of M. Louis de Franchi. The seconds of Château-Renard had already called, and I passed them on the stairs.

Louis had written me a note; with another friend, Baron Giordano Martelli, the affair was to be arranged with Baron de Châteaugrand, and M. de Boissy, the gentleman I had met on the stairs.

I looked at the cards of these two men, and asked Louis if the matter was of any great seriousness.

Louis replied by telling the story of the quarrel. A friend of his, a sea captain, had married a beautiful woman, so beautiful and so young that Louis could not help falling in love with her. As an honourable man he had kept away from the house, and then on being reproached by his friend, had frankly told him the reason.

In return, his friend, who was just setting off for Mexico, commended his wife, Emilie, whom he adored and trusted absolutely, to his care, and asked his wife to consider Louis de Franchi as her brother. For six months the captain had been away, and Emilie had been living at her mother's. To this house, among other visitors, had come M. de Château-Renard, and from the first, this typical man of the world had been an object of dislike to Louis. Emilie's flirtations with Château-Renard at last provoked a remonstrance from Louis, and in return the lady told him that he was in love with her himself, and that he was absurd in his notions. After that Louis had left off calling on Emilie, but gossip was soon busy with the lady's name.

An anonymous letter had made an appointment for Louis with the lady of the violets at the masked ball,

and from this person he was informed again not only of Emilie's infidelity, but further, that M. de Château-Renard had wagered he would bring her to supper at D——'s.

The rest I knew, and I could only assent mournfully that things must go on, and that the proposals of Château-Renard's seconds could not be declined.

But M. Louis de Franchi had never touched sword or pistol in his life! However, there was nothing for it but to return M. de Châteaugrand's call.

Martelli and I found that Château-Renard's two supporters were both polite men of the world. They were as indifferent as Louis was to the choice of weapons, and by a spin of a coin it was decided that pistols were to be used.

The place agreed upon for the duel was the Bois de Vincennes, and the time nine o'clock the following morning.

I called in the evening on Louis to ask him if he had any instructions for me; but his only reply was "Counsel comes with the night," so I waited on him next morning.

He was just finishing a letter when I entered, and he bade his servant Joseph leave us undisturbed for ten minutes.

"I am anxious," said Louis, "that my friend Giordano Martelli, who is a Corsican, should not know of this letter. But you must promise to carry out my wishes, and then my family may be saved a second misfortune. Now, please read the letter."

I read the letter Louis had written. It was to his mother, and it said that he was dying of brain fever. Her son, writing in a lucid interval, was beyond hope of recovery. It would be posted to her a quarter of an hour after his death. There was an affectionate postscript to Lucien.

"What does this mean? I don't understand it," I said.

"It means that at ten minutes past nine I shall be dead. I have been forewarned, that is all. My father appeared to me last night and announced my death."

He spoke so simply of this visit, that if it was an illusion it was as terribly convincing as the truth.

"There is one thing more," said Louis. "If my brother was to hear that I had been killed in a duel, he would at once leave Sullacro to come and fight the man who had killed me. And then if he were killed in his turn my mother would be thrice widowed. To prevent that I have written this letter. If it is believed that I have died of brain fever no one can be blamed." He paused. "Unless, unless—but no, that must not be."

I knew that my own strange fear was his.

On the way to Vincennes Baron Giordano stopped to get a case of pistols, powder, and balls, and we arrived at our destination just as M. de Château-Renard's carriage drove up. At M. de Châteaugrand's suggestion we all made our way to a certain glade away from the public pathway.

Martelli and Châteaugrand measured the distance together, while Louis bade me farewell, asking me to accept his watch, and begging me to keep the duel out of the papers, and to prevail upon Giordano not to let any word of the matter reach Sullacro.

M. Château-Renard was at his post. Baron Giordano gave Louis his pistol.

Châteaugrand called out, "Gentlemen, are you ready?" Then he clapped his hands "One, two, three."

Two shots went off at the same moment, and Louis de Franchi fell. His opponent was unhurt. I rushed to Louis and raised him up. Blood came to his lips. It was useless to send for a surgeon.

Château-Renard had withdrawn, but his seconds hastened to express their horror at the fatal ending of the combat.

Châteaugrand added that he hoped M. de Franchi bore no malice against his opponent.

"No, no, I forgive him!" said Louis. "But tell him to leave Paris. He must go."

The dying man spoke with difficulty. He reminded me of my promise, and asked me, as he fell back, to look at my watch.

It was exactly ten minutes past nine, and Louis was dead.

We carried the body back to the house, and Giordano made the required statement to the District Commissioner of Police. Then the house was sealed by the police, and Louis de Franchi was laid to rest in Père-Lachaise. But M. de Château-Renard could not be persuaded to leave Paris, though MM. de Boissy and de Châteaugrand both did their best to induce him to go.

IV.—Lucien Takes Vengeance

One night, five days after the funeral, I was working late at my writing-table, when my servant entered, and told me in a frightened tone that M. de Franchi wanted to speak to me.

"Who?" I said, in astonishment.

"M. de Franchi, sir, your friend—the gentleman who has been here once or twice to see you."

"You must be out of your senses, Victor! Don't you know that he died five days ago?"

"Yes, sir; and that's why I am so upset. I heard a ring at the bell, and when I opened the door, he walked in, asked if you were at home, and told me to tell you that M. de Franchi desired to speak with you."

"Are you out of your mind, my good man? I suppose the hall is badly lit, and you were half-asleep and heard the name wrong. Go back and ask the name again."

"No, sir, I will swear that I'm not mistaken. I'm sure I heard and saw perfectly."

"Very well, then, show him in."

Victor went back to the door, trembling all the time, and said, "Please step in, sir."

My hasty sensation of terror was quickly dispelled. It was Lucien who was apologising to me for disturbing me at such an hour.

"The fact is," he said, "I only arrived ten minutes ago, and you will understand how impossible it was not to come and see you at once."

I at once thought of the letter I had sent. In five days it could not have reached Sullacro.

"Good heaven!" I cried. "Nothing is known to you?"

"Everything is known," he said quietly.

Lucien mentioned that on going to his brother's house, the people were so panic-stricken that they refused the door to him.

"Tell me," I said, when we were alone. "You must have been on your way here when you heard the fatal news?"

"On the contrary, I was at Sullacro. Have you forforgotten what I told you about the apparitions in my family?"

"Has your brother appeared to you?" I cried.

"Yes. He told me he had been killed in a duel by M. de Château-Renard. I saw my brother in his room the day he was killed," Lucien went on, "and that night in a dream I saw the place where the duel was fought, and heard the name of M. de Château-Renard. And I have come to Paris to kill the man who killed my brother. My brother had never touched a pistol in his life, and it was as easy to kill him as to kill a tame stag. My mother knows why I have come. She is a true Corsican, and she kissed me on the forehead and said 'Go!'"

The next morning Lucien wrote to Giordano and sent a challenge to Château-Renard. Then he went with me to Vincennes, and, though he had never been there in his

life before, Lucien walked straight to the spot where his brother had fallen. He turned round, walked twenty paces, and said, "This is where the villain stood, and to-morrow he will lie here."

Lucien predicted with absolute confidence the death of Château-Renard. The challenge was accepted, the same seconds acted, and on the morrow we assembled in the fatal glade. Château-Renard was obviously uneasy. The signal was given, both men fired, and, sure enough, Château-Renard fell, shot through the temple as Lucien had foretold.

Then, for the first time since Louis' death, Lucien burst into tears. He dropped his pistol and threw himself into my arms. "My brother, my dear brother!" he cried.

The Count of Monte Cristo

I.—The Conspiracy of Envy

On February 28, 1815, the three-masted Pharaon arrived at Marseilles from Smyrna, commanded by the first mate, young Edmond Dantès, the captain having died on the voyage. He had left a package for the

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"The Count of Monte Cristo" appeared in 1844, when Dumas had been writing plays and stories for twenty years, and at a period when he was most extraordinarily prolific. In that year, assisted by his staff of compilers and transcribers, he is said to have turned out something like forty volumes! "Monte Cristo" first gave Dumas' novels a world-wide audience. Its unflagging spirit, the endless surprises, and the air of reality which was cast over the most extravagant situations made the work worthy of the popularity it enjoyed in almost every country in the world. The island from which it takes its name is a barren rock rising 2,000 feet out of the sea a few miles south of Elba. Dumas attempted to emulate Scott, and built a château near St. Germain, which he called Monte Cristo, costing over $125,000. It was afterwards sold for a tenth of that sum to pay his debts.

Maréchal Bertrand on the Isle of Elba, which Dantès had duly delivered, conversing with the exiled Emperor Napoleon himself.

The shipowner, M. Morrel, confirmed young Dantès in the command, and, overjoyed, he hastened to his father, and then to the village of the Catalans, near Marseilles, where the dark-eyed Mercédès, his betrothed, impatiently awaited him.

But his good fortune excited envy. Danglars, the supercargo of the Pharaon, wanted the command for himself, and Fernand, the Catalan cousin of Mercédès, hated Dantès because he had won her heart. Fernand's jealousy so took possession of him that he fell in willingly with a scheme which the envious Danglars proposed. Making use of Dantès' compromising visit to Elba, they addressed an anonymous denunciation to the *procureur du roi,* which, in this period of Bonapartist plots, was indeed a formidable matter. Caderousse, a boon companion, was at first taken into their confidence, but as he came to think it a dangerous trick to play the young captain, he refused to take part in it.

On the morrow the wedding-feast took place, and at two o'clock Dantès, radiant with joy and happiness, prepared to accompany his bride to the hotel de ville for the civil ceremony. But at that moment the measured tread of soldiery was heard on the stairs, and a magistrate presented himself, bearing an order for the arrest of Edmond Dantès. Resistance or remonstrance was useless, and Dantès suffered himself to be taken to Marseilles, where he was examined by the deputy *procureur du roi,* M. de Villefort. To him, on demand, he recounted the story of his visit to Elba.

"Ah!" said Villefort, "if you have been culpable it was imprudence. Give up this letter you have brought from Elba, and go and rejoin your friends."

"You have it already," cried Dantès.

Villefort glanced at it, and sank into his seat, stupe-

fied. It was addressed to M. Noirtier, a staunch Bonapartist.

"Oh, if he knew the contents of this," murmured he, "and that Noirtier is father of Villefort, I am lost!" He approached the fire, and cast the fatal letter in.

"Sir," said he, "I shall detail you till this evening in the Palais de Justice. Should anyone else interrogate you do not breathe a word of this letter."

"I promise."

It was Villefort who seemed to entreat, and the prisoner to reassure him.

But the doom of Edmond Dantès was cast. Sacrificed to Villefort's ambition, he was lodged the same night in a dungeon of the gloomy fortress-prison of the Château d'If, while Villefort posted to Paris to warn the king that the usurper Bonaparte was meditating a landing in France.

Napoleon returned. There followed the Hundred Days, and Louis XVIII. again mounted the throne. M. Morrel's intercessions during Napoleon's brief triumph for the release of Dantès but served, on the restoration of Louis, to compromise further the unhappy prisoner, who languished in a foul prison in the depths of the Château d'If.

In the cell next to Dantès was another political prisoner, the Abbé Faria. He had been in the château four years when Dantès was immured, and, with marvellously contrived tools and incredible toil, had burrowed a tunnel through the rock fifty feet long, only to find that, instead of leading to the outer wall of the château, whence he could have flung himself into the sea, it led to the cell of another prisoner—Dantès. He penetrated it after Dantès had been solitary six years.

The prisoners met every day between the visits of their gaolers. Faria showed Dantès the products of his industry and ingenuity—his books, written on the linen of shirts, his fish-bone pens and needles, knives, and

matches, all accomplished secretly; and beguiled much of the weariness of confinement by educating Dantès in the sciences, history, and languages. Dantès possessed a prodigious memory, combined with readiness of conception, and his studies progressed rapidly. Soon Dantès told the abbé his story, and the abbé had little difficulty in opening the eyes of the astonished Dantès to the villainy of his supposed friends and the deputy *procureur*. Thus was instilled into his heart a new passion—vengeance.

II.—The Cemetery of the Château d'If

More than seven years passed thus when coming into the abbé's dungeon one night, Dantès found him stricken with paralysis. His right arm and leg remained paralysed after the seizure. When Dantès next visited him the abbé showed him a paper, half-burnt, and rolled in a cylinder.

"This paper," said Faria, "is my treasure; and if I have not been allowed to possess it, you will. Who knows if another attack may not come, and all be finished?"

The abbé had been secretary to the last of the Counts of Spada, one of the most powerful families of mediæval Italy, and he, dying in poverty, had left Faria an old breviary, which had been in the family since the days of the Borgias. In this, by chance, Faria found a piece of yellowed paper, on which, when put in the fire, writing began to appear. From the remains of the paper he made out during the early days of his imprisonment, that a Cardinal Spada, at the end of the fifteenth century, fearing poisoning at the hands of Pope Alexander VI., had buried in the Island of Monte Cristo, a rock between Corsica and Elba, all his ingots, gold, money, and jewels, amounting then to nearly two million Roman crowns.

"The last Count of Spada made me his heir," said the abbé. "The treasure now amounts to nearly thirteen millions of money!"

The abbé remained paralysed, and had given up all hope of enjoying the treasure himself; and presently another seizure took him, and one night Dantès was alone with the corpse.

Next morning the preparations for burying the dead man were made, the body being placed in a sack and left in the cell till the evening. Dantès came into the cell again.

"Ah!" he muttered. "Since the dead leave this dungeon, let me assume the place of the dead!"

Opening the sack, he took out the dead body of his friend, and dragged it through the tunnel to his own cell. Placing it on his own bed, he covered it with the rags he wore himself. Then he sewed himself in the sack with one of the abbé's needles. In his hand he held the dead man's knife, and with palpitating heart awaited events.

Slowly the hours dragged on, until at length he heard the heavy footsteps of the gaolers descending to the cell. They lifted the sack, and carried him on a bier through the castle passages, until they came to a door, which was opened. On passing through this, the noise of the waves was heard as they dashed on the rocks below.

Then Dantès felt that they took him by the head and by the heels, and flung him into the sea, into whose depths he was dragged by a thirty-six-pound shot tied to his feet. The sea is the cemetery of Château d'If!

Although giddy, and almost suffocated, he had yet sufficient presence of mind to hold his breath; and as his right hand held his knife, he rapidly ripped up the sack, extricated his arm, and then, by a desperate effort, severed the cord that bound his legs at the moment he was suffocating. With a vigorous spring he rose to the surface, paused to breathe, and then dived again, in

order to avoid being seen. When he rose again, he struck boldly out to sea, and, fortunately, was picked up by a sailing-vessel.

Now at liberty, fourteen years after his arrest, he renewed an oath of implacable vengeance against Danglars, Fernand, and Villefort. Nor was it long before he had discovered the secret cave in the island of Monte Cristo, with all its dazzling wealth, as the Abbé Faria had truly foretold. He now stood possessed of such means of vengeance as never in his wildest dreams had any innocent prisoner hoped to be able to command.

III.—Vengeance Begins

Some two years later Gaspar Caderousse, the keeper of an inn near Beaucaire, was lounging listlessly at his door, when a traveller on horseback dismounted at his door and entered. The visitor—Monte Cristo—gave the name of Abbé Busoni, and astonished Caderousse by showing a minute knowledge of his earlier history. The abbé explained that he had been present at the death of Edmond Dantès in prison, and said that even in his dying moments the prisoner had protested he was utterly ignorant of the cause of his imprisonment.

"And so he was!" exclaimed Caderousse. "How should he have been otherwise?"

The abbé had heard of the death of Edmond's aged father, and now he was told the old man had died of starvation.

"Thus Heaven recompenses virtue," said Caderousse. "I am in destitution and shall die of hunger, as old Dantès did, whilst Fernand and Danglars roll in wealth. All their malpractices have turned to luck. Danglars speculated and made a fortune. He is a millionaire, and now Count Danglars. Fernand played traitor at the battle of Ligny, and that served for his recommendation to the Bourbons. Afterwards he became Count de

Morcerf, and got a considerable sum by the betrayal of Ali Pasha in the Greek war of independence."

The abbé, making an effort, said, "And Mercédès—she disappeared?"

"Yes, as the sun, to rise next day with more splendour. She is rich, the Countess de Morcerf—she waited two hopeless years for Dantès—and yet I am sure she is not happy."

"And M. de Villefort?" asked the abbé.

"Some time after having arrested Dantès, he married and left Marseilles; no doubt but he has been as lucky as the rest."

"God may seem sometimes to forget for a time," said the abbé, "while His justice reposes, but there always comes a moment when He remembers."

. . . . . .

Early in 1838 a certain Count of Monte Cristo became a great figure in the life of Paris. His name awakened thoughts of romance and dazzling wealth in the minds of all. It was Albert, the son of the Count de Morcerf, who first introduced the Count of Monte Cristo to the high society of Paris. They had become acquainted at Rome, where Monte Cristo had been able to render a great service to the Viscount Albert de Morcerf and his friend, the Baron Franz d'Epinay.

All sorts of stories were afloat in Paris as to the history of this Count of Monte Cristo. When he went to the opera he was accompanied by a beautiful Greek girl, named Haidée, whose guardian he was.

But nothing ruffled Monte Cristo. Calmness and deliberation marked all his movements; in some respects he was more like a machine than a human being. Everything he said he would do was done precisely. And now the schemes he had long studied in secret he had begun to carry through as certainly and relentlessly as Fate.

M. de Villefort, now *procureur du roi*, had a daughter by his first wife, for he had married a second time.

Her name was Valentine, and at the command of her father, but not by her own wish, she was engaged to the Baron Franz d'Epinay. She loved a young military officer named Maximilian Morrel, a son of the Marseilles shipowner. But neither of them had dared to avow their affection for each other to Valentine's father.

Meanwhile, the tide of fortune seemed to have turned with Baron Danglars. His business had suffered many losses, but his greatest loss of all was due to some false news about the price of shares which had been telegraphed to Paris by means which Monte Cristo could have explained.

The baron's daughter was engaged to Albert de Morcerf, but the Count of Morcerf had now come under a cloud, for his betrayal of Ali Pasha had been made public; and perhaps the Count of Monte Cristo could have told how the truth came out at last. So the baron did not hesitate to break the engagement, and to accept as the suitor for his daughter a dashing young man known as Count Cavalcanti, who had been introduced to Paris by Monte Cristo, but concerning whose antecedents nothing seemed to be known.

The Count de Morcerf was tried for his betrayal of Ali, and seemed likely to be acquitted, when a veiled woman was brought to the place of trial, and testified before the committee that she was the daughter of Ali Pasha, and that Morcerf had not only betrayed her father to the Turks, but had sold her and her mother into slavery. The veiled woman was Haidée, the ward of Monte Cristo. The count was now a ruined man, and when his son Albert discovered the part that Monte Cristo had played, he publicly insulted the count at the opera.

A duel was averted, for Albert publicly apologised to the count when he learned the reasons for his actions. Furious that he had not been avenged by his son, Morcerf rushed to the house of Monte Cristo.

"I came to tell you," said Morcerf, "that as the young people of the present day will not fight, it remains for us to do it."

"So much the better," said Monte Cristo. "Are you prepared?"

"Yes, sir; and witnesses are unnecessary, as we know each other so little."

"Truly they are unnecessary," said Monte Cristo, "but for the reason that we know each other well. Are you not the soldier Fernand who deserted on the eve of Waterloo? Are you not the Lieutenant Fernand who served as guide and spy to the French army in Spain? Are you not the Captain Fernand who betrayed, sold, and murdered his benefactor, Ali?"

"Oh," cried the general, "wretch, to reproach me with my shame! Tell me your real name that I may pronounce it when I plunge my sword through your heart."

At this Monte Cristo, bounding to a dressing room near, quickly pulled off his coat, and waistcoat, and, donning a sailor's jacket and hat, was back in an instant.

Gazing for a moment in terror at this man who seemed to have risen from the dead to avenge his wrongs, Morcerf turned, seeking the wall to support him, and went out by the door uttering the cry—"Edmond Dantès!"

Events marched rapidly now, and Paris had scarcely ceased talking of the suicide of the Count de Morcerf, when Cavalcanti, identified as a former galley-slave named Benedetto, was arrested for the murder of a fellow-convict.

Danglars fled from France, his great business in ruin. With him he took a large sum of money belonging to Paris hospitals, which, however, was taken from him near Rome by brigands controlled by Monte Cristo.

IV.—Vengeance is Complete

In the household of Villefort, Monte Cristo had done nothing to bring vengeance on that evil man. He had seen from the first that Villefort's second wife was studying the art of poisoning, and he felt that revenge was already at work here. There had already been three mysterious deaths in the house, and now the beautiful Valentine seemed to be suffering from the early effects of some slow poison. Maximilian Morrel, in despair of Valentine's life, rushed to Monte Cristo for his advice and assistance.

"Must I let one of the accursed race escape?" Monte Cristo asked himself, but decided, for Maxmilian's sake, that he would save Valentine. He had bought the house adjoining that of Villefort, and, clearing out the tenants, had engaged workmen to remove so much of the old wall between the two houses that it was a simple matter for him to take out the remaining stones and pass into a large cupboard in Valentine's room. Here the count watched while Valentine was asleep, and saw Madame de Villefort creep into the room and substitute for the medicine in Valentine's glass a dose of poison.

He then entered the room and threw half the draught into the fireplace, leaving the rest in the glass. When Valentine awoke he gave her a pellet of hashish, which made her sink into a deathlike sleep.

Next morning the doctor declared that Valentine was dead. In the glass he discovered poison, and as the same poison was found in madame's laboratory, there was no doubt of her guilt. She admitted all, and confessed that her object had been to make her own son sole heir to Villefort's fortune.

Madame de Villefort fell at her husband's feet. He addressed her with passionate words of reproach as he turned to leave her.

"Think of it, madame," he said; "if on my return justice has not been satisfied, I will denounce you with my own mouth, and arrest you with my own hands! I am going to the court to pronounce sentence of death on a murderer. If I find you alive on my return, you shall sleep to-night in gaol."

Madame sighed, her nerves gave way, and she sank on the carpet.

But Villefort little knew at the moment he spoke these burning words to the woman who was his wife that he himself was not going out to condemn a fellow-sinner, but to be himself condemned. For the man to whom he referred as a murderer was the so-called Count Cavalcanti, really Benedetto, who now turned out to be an illegitimate son of Villefort's whom he had endeavoured to bury alive as an infant in the garden of a house at Auteuil. The night before the criminal had had a long interview with Monte Cristo's steward, who had disclosed to the prisoner the secret of his birth, and in court he declared his father was Villefort, the public prosecutor! This statement made a great commotion in the court, and all eyes were on Villefort, while Benedetto continued to answer the questions of the president, and proved that he was the child whom Villefort would have buried alive years before. The public prosecutor himself confirmed the prisoner's story by admitting his guilt, and staggering from the court.

When Villefort arrived at his own house he found everything in confusion. Making his way to his wife's apartments, he had the horror of meeting her while she still lived, just at the very instant when the poison she had taken did its work, and of finding a moment or two after that she had poisoned his little son Edward.

This was more than the brain of man could endure, and Villefort turned from the tragic scene a raving madman, rushing wildly to the garden, and beginning to dig with a spade.

The vengeance of Edmond Dantès, so long delayed, so carefully and laboriously planned, was now complete, and it only remained for him to perform the last of his marvels, at the same time giving proof of his boundless generosity. Valentine de Villefort had been buried, and Maximilian was in despair; but Monte Cristo urged the young man to have patience and hope.

It seemed a strange thing to ask a lover whose sweetheart had been placed within the tomb to have hope and to come to Monte Cristo in one month. But this was the bargain they made.

When the month had passed, Maximilian came to the isle of Monte Cristo.

"I have your word," he said to the count, "that you would help me die or give me Valentine!"

"Ah! A miracle alone can save you—the resurrection of Valentine! Thus do I fulfil my promise!"

Monte Cristo turned to a jewelled cabinet, and took from it a tube of greenish paste. Maximilian swallowed some of the mysterious substance, which was but hashish. He sat down and waited.

"Monte Cristo," he said, "I feel that I am dying—good-bye!"

Meanwhile, Monte Cristo had opened a door from which a great light streamed. Maximilian opened his eyes, looked towards the light; and then—he saw Valentine!

Then Monte Cristo spoke. "He calls you, Valentine, even as he thinks he dies by his own will. But even as I saved you from the tomb, so have I saved him. I feared for his reason if he saw you, except in a trance—from his trance he will wake to happiness!"

Next morning Valentine and Maximilian were walking on the beach, when Jacopo, the captain of Monte Cristo's yacht, gave them a letter. As they looked on the superscription they cried, simultaneously, "Gone!"

In his letter, Monte Cristo, said: "All that is in this

grotto, my friend, my house in the Champs Elysées, and my château at Tréport, are the marriage gifts bestowed by Edmond Dantès upon the son of his old master, Morrel. Mademoiselle de Villefort will share them with you; for I entreat her to give to the poor the immense fortune reverting to her from her father, now a madman, and her brother, who died last September with his mother."

"But where is the count?" asked Morrel eagerly. Jacopo pointed towards the horizon, where a white sail was visible.

"And where is Haidée?" asked Valentine. Jacopo still pointed towards the sail.

The Three Musketeers

I.—The Musketeer's Apprenticeship

D'ARTAGNAN was without acquaintances in Paris, and now on the very day of his arrival he was committed to fight with three of the most distinguished of the king's musketeers.

Coming from Gascony, a youth with all the pride and ambition of his race, D'Artagnan had brought no money

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It was not till the publication of "The Three Musketeers," in 1844, that the amazing gifts of Dumas were fully recognised. From 1844 till 1850, the literary output of novels, plays, and historical memoirs was enormous, and so great was the demand for Dumas' work that he made no attempt to supply his customers single-handed, but engaged a host of assistants, and was content to revise and amend—or in some cases only to sign—their productions. "The Three Musketeers" was followed by its sequel, "Twenty Years After," in 1845, and the story was continued still further in the "Vicomte de Bragelonne." The "Valois" series of novels, "Monte Cristo," and the "Memoirs of a Physician," were all published before 1850, in addition to many dramatised versions of stories.

with him, but only a letter of introduction from his father to M. de Treville, captain of the musketeers. But he had been taught that by courage alone could a man now make his way to fortune, and that he was to bear nothing, save from the cardinal—the great Cardinal Richelieu, or from the king—Louis XIII.

It was immediately after his interview with M. de Treville that D'Artagnan, well trained at home as a swordsman, quarrelled with the three musketeers.

First, on the palace stairs, he ran violently into Athos, who was suffering from a wounded shoulder.

"Excuse me," said D'Artagnan. "Excuse me, but I am in a hurry."

"You are in a hurry?" said the musketeer, pale as a sheet. "Under that pretence, you run against me; you say 'Excuse me!' and you think that sufficient. You are not polite; it is easy to see that you are from the country."

D'Artagnan had already passed on, but this remark made him stop short.

"However far I may come it is not you, monsieur, who can give me a lesson in manners, I warn you."

"Perhaps," said Athos, "you are in a hurry now, but you can find me without running after me. Do you understand me"

"Where, and when?" said D'Artagnan.

"Near the Carmes-Deschaux at noon," replied Athos. "And please do not keep me waiting, for at a quarter past twelve I will cut off your ears if you run."

"Good!" cried D'Artagnan. "I will be there at ten minutes to twelve."

At the street gate Porthos was talking with the soldiers on guard. Between the two there was just room for a man to pass, and D'Artagnan hurried on, only to find himself enveloped in the long velvet cloak of Porthos, which the wind had blown out.

"The fellow must be mad," said Porthos, "to run

against people in this manner! Do you always forget your eyes when you happen to be in a hurry?"

"No," replied D'Artagnan, who, in extricating himself from the cloak, had observed that the handsome cloth of gold coat worn by Porthos was only gold in front and plain buff at the back, "no, and thanks to my eyes, I can see what others cannot see."

"Monsieur," said Porthos angrily, "you stand a chance of getting chastised if you run against musketeers in this fashion. I shall look for you, at one o'clock behind the Luxembourg."

"Very well, at one o'clock then," replied D'Artagnan, turning into the street.

A few minutes later D'Artagnan annoyed Aramis, the third musketeer, who was chatting with some gentleman of the king's musketeers. As D'Artagnan came up Aramis accidentally dropped an embroidered pocket-handkerchief and covered it at once with his foot to prevent observation. D'Artagnan, conscious of a certain want of politeness in his treatment of Athos and Porthos, and determined to be more obliging in future, stooped and picked up the handkerchief—much to the vexation of Aramis, who denied all claim to the delicate piece of cambric.

D'Artagnan not taking the rebukes of Aramis in good part, they fixed two o'clock as the hour of meeting.

The two young men bowed and separated, Aramis going up the street which led to the Luxembourg, whilst D'Artagnan, finding that it was near noon, took the road to the Carmes-Deschaux, saying to himself, "Decidedly I can't draw back; but at least if I am killed, I shall be killed by a musketeer."

Knowing nobody in Paris, D'Artagnan went to his appointment without a second.

It was just striking twelve when he arrived on the ground, and Athos, still suffering from his old wound on the shoulder, was already waiting for his adversary.

Athos explained with all politeness that his seconds had not yet arrived.

"If you are in great haste, monsieur," said D'Artagnan, "and if it be your will to despatch me at once, do not inconvenience yourself. I am ready. But if you would wait three days till your shoulder is healed, I have a miraculous balsam given me by my mother, and I am sure this balsam will cure your wound. At the end of three days it would still do me a great honour to be your man."

"That is well said," said Athos, "and it pleases me. Thus spoke the gallant knights of Charlemagne. Monsieur, I love men of your stamp, and I can tell that if we don't kill each other, I shall enjoy your society. But here comes my seconds."

"What!" cried D'Artagnan as Porthos and Aramis appeared. "Are these gentlemen your seconds?"

"Yes," replied Athos. "Are you not aware that we are never seen one without the others, and that we are called the three inseparables?"

"What does this mean?" said Porthos, who had now come up and stood astonished.

"This is the gentleman I am to fight with," said Athos, pointing to D'Artagnan and saluting him.

"Why I am also going to fight with him," said Porthos.

"But not before one o'clock," replied D'Artagnan.

"Well, and I also am going to fight with that gentleman," said Aramis.

"But not till two o'clock," said D'Artagnan calmly.

"And now you are all assembled, gentleman, permit me to offer you my excuses."

At this word "excuses" a cloud passed over the brow of Athos, a haughty smile curled the lip of Porthos, and a negative sign was the reply of Aramis.

"You do not understand me, gentleman," said D'Artagnan, throwing up his head. "I ask to be excused

in case I should not be able to discharge my debt to all three; for M. Athos has the right to kill me first. And now, gentleman, I repeat, excuse me, but on that account only, and—guard!"

At these words D'Artagnan drew his sword, and at that moment so elated was he that he would have drawn his sword against all the musketeers in the kingdom.

Scarcely had the two rapiers sounded on meeting, when a company of the cardinal's guards appeared on the scene. At that time there was not only a standing feud between the king's musketeers and the guards of Cardinal Richelieu, there was also a prohibition against duelling.

"The cardinal's guards! The cardinal's guards!" cried Aramis and Porthos at the same time. "Sheathe swords, gentlemen! Sheathe swords!" But it was too late.

Jussac, commander of the guards, had seen the combatants in a position which could not be mistaken.

"Hullo, musketeers," he called out; "fighting, are you, in spite of the edicts? Well, duty before everything. Sheathe your swords, please, and follow us."

"That is quite impossible," said Aramis politely. "The best thing you can do is to pass on your way."

"We shall charge upon you, then," said Jussac. "if you disobey."

"There are five of them," said Athos, "and we are but three. We shall be beaten, and must die on the spot, for on my part I will never face my captain as a conquered man."

Athos, Porthos, and Aramis instantly closed in, and Jussac drew up his soldiers.

In that short interval D'Artagnan determined on the part he was to take; it was a decision of life-long importance. He had to choose between the king and the cardinal, and the choice made, it must be persisted in. He turned towards Athos and his friends. "Gentlemen,"

said he, "allow me to correct your words. You said you were but three, but it appears to me we are four. I do not wear the uniform, but my heart is that of a musketeer."

"Withdraw, young man, and save your skin!" cried Jussac.

The three musketeers thought of D'Artagnan's youth, and dreaded his inexperience.

"Try me, gentlemen," said D'Artagnan, "and I swear to you that I will never go hence if we are conquered."

Athos pressed the young man's hand, and exclaimed, "Well, then! Athos, Porthos, Aramis, and D'Artagnan, forward!"

The nine combatants rushed upon each other with fury, and the battle ended in the utter discomfiture of the cardinal's guards, one of whom was slain and three badly wounded. The musketeers returned walking arm in arm. D'Artagnan marched between Athos and Porthos, his heart full of delight.

"If I am not yet a musketeer," said he to his new friends, "at least, I have entered upon my apprenticeship, haven't I?"

II.—The Queen's Diamonds

The king, always jealous of Richelieu's guards, was extremely pleased when he heard from M. de Treville of the fight that had taken place. He gave D'Artagnan a handful of gold, and promised him a place in the ranks of the musketeers at the first vacancy; in the meantime he was to join a company of royal guards. From this time the life of the four young men became common, for D'Artagnan fell quite easily into the habits of his three friends.

Athos, who was scarcely thirty years old, was of great personal beauty and intelligence of mind. He never spoke of women, he never laughed, rarely smiled, and

his reserved and silent habits seemed to make him a much older man.

Porthos was exactly the opposite of Athos. He not only talked much, but he talked loudly, not caring whether anyone listened to him. He would talk about anything except the sciences, alleging that from childhood dated his inveterate hatred of learning. The physical strength of Porthos was enormous, and with all the vanity of a child he was a thoroughly loyal and brave man.

As for Aramis, he always gave out that he intended to take orders in the Church, and was merely a musketeer for the time being. Aramis revelled in intrigues and mysteries.

What the real names of his comrades were D'Artagnan had no idea. That the names they bore had been assumed was all he knew.

The motto of the four was "all for one, one for all." D'Artagnan had already earned the dislike of Cardinal Richelieu by his part in the fight with the cardinal's guards; it was not long before his daring gave greater cause for offence.

The king suspected his wife, Anne of Austria, of being in love with the Duke of Buckingham, and the cardinal suspected the queen of intriguing with Buckingham against France. Now, a secret interview had taken place at the palace between Buckingham and the queen, and the cardinal, who employed spies everywhere, found out this as he found out everything, and determined to destroy the queen's reputation, for there was deadly enmity between Anne of Austria and Richelieu.

Buckingham had received from the queen a set of diamond studs—a present from the king—as a keepsake; so the cardinal despatched a certain lady, a woman of rare beauty, known as "Milady," to England, to get hold of two of these studs.

Then the cardinal, by fostering the royal suspicion, persuaded the king to give a grand ball whereat the

queen should wear the diamond studs. By this means Louis would be convinced of Buckingham's visit, for the set of studs would be incomplete.

The queen was in dispair. It was D'Artagnan and the three musketeeers who saved her honour. D'Artagnan loved Madame Bonacieux, a confidential dressmaker of the queen's; and this woman, devoted to her royal mistress, gave D'Artagnan a secret note from the queen to Buckingham.

D'Artagnan went at once to M. de Treville, obtained leave of absence for himself and his friends, and set out for England. It was not a minute too soon, for the cardinal had already made plans to prevent any such counter-move, giving orders that no one was to sail from France without a permit.

Between Paris and Calais, Porthos, Aramis, and Athos were all left behind, wounded by Richelieu's guards, and D'Artagnan only effected a passage to Dover by fighting and nearly killing a young noble who held a permit from the cardinal to leave France.

Once in England, D'Artagnan hastened to find Buckingham. The latter discovered, to his horror, that Milady had already become possessed cunningly of two of the precious studs, and D'Artagnan had to wait while the skill of the first English jeweller made good the loss beyond detection.

He returned to Paris with the twelve studs in time for the royal ball. Milady had already given the two she had stolen to the cardinal, who had passed them on to the king.

"What does this mean, Monsieur le Cardinal?" said the king severely, when in the middle of the ball he found, to his joy, that the queen was already wearing twelve diamonds.

"It means, sire," the cardinal replied, with vexation, "that I was anxious to present her majesty with two studs, but did not dare to offer them myself."

"I am very grateful," said Anne of Austria, fully alive to the cardinal's defeat, "only I am afraid these two studs must have cost your eminence as much as all the others cost his majesty."

The man, D'Artagnan, to whom the queen owed this extraordinary triumph over her enemy, stood unknown in the crowd that gathered round the doors. It was only when the queen retired that someone touched him on the shoulder and bade him follow. He readily obeyed; D'Artagnan waited in an ante-room of the queen's apartments; he could hear voices within, and presently a hand and an arm, marvellously white and beautiful, came through the tapestry.

D'Artagnan felt that this was his reward. He dropped on his knees, seized the hand, and touched it modestly with his lips. Then the hand was withdrawn, and in his own a ring was left. The tapestry closed, and his guide, no other than Bonacieux, reappeared and escorted him hastily to the corridor.

III.—The Musketeers at La Rochelle

The siege of La Rochelle was an important affair, one of the chief political events of the reign of Louis XIII.

For a time D'Artagnan was separated from his friends, for the musketeers were escorting the king to the seat of war, and our intrepid Gascon was with the main army. It was now that D'Artagnan began to realise that he had attracted, not only the displeasure of the cardinal, but also the deadly hatred of Milady, the cardinal's secret agent, whose overtures at friendship, made in the cardinal's interest, he had insulted before leaving Paris, and whose secret shame he had discovered.

Twice his life was nearly taken by hired assassins, and the third time a present of wine turned out to be poisoned.

To add to his natural discomfort, Madame Bonacieux had disappeared from Paris, and probably was in prison.

The arrival of the musketeers restored his spirits, and the four were again inseparable. One drawback to their intercourse was the fact that the cardinal and his spies were all over the camp, and that, consequently, it was difficult to talk confidentially without being overheard.

In order to secure privacy for a conference, they decided to go and breakfast in a bastion near the enemy's lines, and wagered with some officers they would stay there an hour. It was a position of terrible danger, but the feat was accomplished, and the wild undertaking of the musketeers was acclaimed with tremendous enthusiasm in the French camp.

The noise reached the cardinal's ears, and he inquired its meaning.

"Monseigneur," said the officer, "three musketeers and a guard laid a wager that they would go and breakfast in the Bastion St. Gervais, and they breakfasted and held it for two hours against the enemy, killing I don't know how many Rochellais."

"Did you inquire the names of those three musketeers?"

"Yes, monseigneur. MM. Athos, Porthos, and Aramis."

"Still the three braves!" muttered the cardinal. "And the guard?"

"M. D'Artagnan!"

"Still my reckless young friend! I must have these four men as my own."

That same night the cardinal spoke to M. de Treville of the episode of the bastion, and gave permission for D'Artagnan to become a musketeer, "for such men should be in the same company," he said.

One night during the siege, the three musketeers, seeking D'Artagnan, were met in a country lane by the cardinal, travelling, as he often did, with a single

attendant. Athos recognised him, and the cardinal bade the three men escort him to a lonely inn. At the door they all alighted. The landlord of the inn received the cardinal, for he had been expecting an officer to visit a lady who was within. The three musketeers were accommodated in a large room on the ground floor, and the cardinal passed up the staircase as a man who knew his road. Porthos and Aramis sat down at the table to dice, while Athos walked up and down the room in a thoughtful mood. To his astonishment, Athos found that, the stovepipe being broken, he could hear all that was passing in the room above.

"Listen, Milady," the cardinal was saying, "this affair is of utmost importance. A small vessel is waiting for you at the mouth of the river. You will go on board to-night and set sail to-morrow morning for England. Half an hour after I have gone, you will leave here. When you reach England, you will seek the Duke of Buckingham, explain to him that I have proofs of his secret interviews with the queen, and tell him that if England moves in support of the besieged in La Rochelle, I will at once ruin the queen."

"But what if he persists in spite of this in making war?" said Milady.

"If he persists? Why, then he must be got rid of. Some woman doubtless exists, handsome, young, and clever, who has a grievance against the duke; and some fanatic can be found to be her instrument."

"The woman exists, and the fanatic will be found," returned Milady. "And now, will monseigneur permit me to speak of my enemies, as we have spoken of yours?"

"Your enemies? Who are they?" asked Richelieu.

"First, there is a meddlesome little woman called Bonacieux. She was in prison at Nantes, but has been conveyed to a convent by an order which the queen obtained from the king. Will your eminence find out where that convent is?"

"I don't object to that."

"Then I have a much more dangerous enemy than the little Bonacieux, and that is her lover, the wretch D'Artagnan. I will get you a thousand proofs that he has conspired with Buckingham."

"Very well; get me proof, and I will send him to the Bastille."

For a few seconds there was silence while the cardinal was writing a note.

Athos at once got up and told his companions he would go out to see if the road was safe, and left the house.

The cardinal gave his final instructions to Milady, and departed with Porthos and Aramis. No sooner had they turned an angle of the road than Athos re-entered the inn, marched boldly upstairs, and before he had been seen, had bolted the door.

Milady turned round, and became exceedingly white.

"The Count de la Fère!" she said.

"Yes, Milady, the Count de la Fère in person. You believed him dead, did you not, as I believed you to be?"

"What do you want? Why do you come here?" said Milady in a hollow voice.

"I have followed your actions," said Athos sternly. "It was you who had Madame Bonacieux carried off; it was you who sent assassins after D'Artagnan, and poisoned his wine. Only to-night you have agreed to assassinate the Duke of Buckingham, and expect D'Artagnan to be slain in return. Now, I care nothing about the Duke of Buckingham; he is an Englishman, but D'Artagnan is my friend."

"M. D'Artagnan insulted me," said Milady.

"Is it possible to insult you?" said Athos. He drew out a pistol and cocked it. "Madame, you will instantly deliver to me the paper you have received from the cardinal; or, upon my soul, I will blow out your brains."

Athos slowly raised his pistol until the weapon almost touched the woman's forehead. Milady knew too well that with this terrible man death would certainly come unless she yielded. She drew the paper out of her bosom and handed it to Athos.

"Take it," she said, "and be accursed."

Athos returned the pistol to his belt, unfolded the paper, and read:

It is by my order, and for the good of the state, that the bearer of this has done what he has done.
Dec. 3rd, 1627. RICHELIEU.

Athos, without looking at the woman, left the inn, mounted his horse, and galloping across country, managed to get in front, on the road, before the cardinal had passed.

For a second, Milady thought of pursuing the cardinal in order to denounce Athos; but unpleasant revelations might be made, and it seemed best to carry out her mission in England, and then, when she had satisfied the cardinal, to claim her revenge.

IV.—The Doom of Milady

Milady accomplished the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham at Portsmouth, and Richelieu was relieved of the fear of English intervention at La Rochelle.

But the doom of Milady was at hand.

The king, weary of the siege, had gone to spend a few days quietly at St. Germains, taking for an escort only twenty of the musketeers, and at Paris the four friends had obtained from M. de Treville a few days' leave of absence.

Aramis had discovered the convent where Madame Bonacieux was confined; it was at Bethune, and thither the musketeers hastened. Unfortunately, Milady reached Bethune first. She had come there to await

the cardinal's orders, and having ingratiated herself with the abbess, learnt that D'Artagnan was on his way with an order from the queen to take Madame Bonacieux to Paris. Milady immediately dispatched a messenger to the cardinal, and at the very moment when the musketeers were at the front entrance, she poured a powder into a glass of wine and bade Madame Bonacieux drink.

"It is not the way I meant to avenge myself," said Milady, as she hastily left the convent by the back gate, "but, *ma foi*, we do what we must!"

The deadly poison did its work. Constance Bonacieux expired in D'Artagnan's arms.

Then the four musketeers, joined by Lord de Winter, who had arrived from England in hot pursuit of Milady, his sister-in-law, set out to overtake the woman who had wrought so much evil.

They came up with Milady at a solitary house near the village of Erquinheim.

The four servants of the musketeers guarded the house; Athos, D'Artagnan, Aramis, Porthos, and De Winter entered.

"What do you want?" screamed Milady.

"We want Charlotte Backson, first called Countess de la Fère, and afterwards Lady de Winter," said Athos. "M. D'Artagnan, it is for you to accuse her first."

"I accuse this woman of having poisoned Constance Bonacieux, and of having attempted to poison me, and I accuse her of having engaged assassins to shoot me," said D'Artagnan.

"I accuse this woman of having procured the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham," said Lord de Winter. "Moreover, my brother, who made her his heiress, died suddenly of a strange disease."

"I married this woman and gave her my name and wealth, and found afterwards she was branded as a felon," said Athos.

The musketeers and Lord de Winter passed sentence of death upon the miserable woman.

She was taken out to the river bank, and beheaded, and her body dropped into the middle of the stream.

"Let the justice of Heaven be done!" they cried in a loud voice.

Within three days the musketeers were back in Paris, ready to return with the king to La Rochelle. Then the cardinal summoned D'Artagnan to his presence.

"You are charged with having corresponded with the enemies of France, with having surprised state secrets, and with having attempted to thwart the plans of your general," said the cardinal.

"The woman who charges me—a branded felon—Milady de Winter, is dead," replied D'Artagnan.

"Dead!" exclaimed the cardinal. "Dead!"

"We have tried her and condemned her," said D'Artagnan. Then he told the cardinal of the poisoning of Madame Bonacieux, and of the subsequent trial and execution.

The cardinal shuddered before he answered quietly, "You will be tried and condemned."

"Monseigneur," said D'Artagnan, "though I have the pardon in my pocket I am willing to die."

"What pardon?" said the cardinal, in astonishment. "From the king?"

"No, a pardon signed by your eminence." D'Artagnan produced the precious paper which Athos had forced Milady to give him before her journey to England.

For a time the cardinal sat looking at the paper before him. Then he slowly tore it up.

"Now I am lost," thought D'Artagnan. "But he shall see how a gentleman can die."

The cardinal went to a table, and wrote a few lines on a parchment.

"Here, monsieur," he said; "I have taken away from you one paper; I give you another. Only the name

is wanting in this commission, and you must fill that up."

D'Artagnan took the document with hesitation. He looked at it, saw it was a lieutenant's commission in the musketeers, and fell at the cardinal's feet.

"Monseigneur, my life is yours. Dispose of it as you will. But I do not deserve this. I have three friends, all more worthy——"

The cardinal interrupted him.

"You are a brave young man, D'Artagnan. Fill up this commission as you will."

D'Artagnan sought out his friends, and offered the commission to them in turn.

But each declined, and Athos filled in the name of D'Artagnan on the commission.

"I shall soon have no more friends. Nothing but bitter recollections!" said D'Artagnan, thinking of Madame Bonacieux.

"You are young yet," Athos answered. "In time these bitter recollections will give way to sweet remembrances."

Twenty Years After

I.—The Parsimony of Mazarin

THE great Richelieu was dead, and his successor, Cardinal Mazarin, a cunning and parsimonious Italian, was chief minister of France. Paris, torn and distracted by civil dissension, and impoverished by heavy taxation, was

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In this first-rate romance, which is a sequel to "The Three Musketeers," and was published in 1845, we have D'Artagnan and the three musketeers in the prime of middle life. Their efforts on behalf of Charles I. are amazing, worthy of anything done when they were twenty years younger. All the characters

seething with revolt, and Mazarin was the object of popular hatred, Anne of Austria, the queen-mother (for Louis XIV. was but a child), sharing his disfavour with the people.

It was under these circumstances that the queen recalled how faithfully D'Artagnan had once served her, and reminded Mazarin of that gallant officer, and of his three friends. Mazarin sent for D'Artagnan, who for twenty years had remained a lieutenant of musketeers, and asked him what had become of his friends.

"I want you and your three friends to be of use to me," said the cardinal. "Where are your friends?"

"I do not know, my lord. We parted company long ago; all three have left the service."

"Where can you find them, then?"

"I can find them wherever they are. It would be my business."

"And what are the conditions for finding them?"

"Money, my lord; as much money as the undertaking may require. Travelling is dear, and I am only a poor lieutenant in the musketeers."

"You will be at my service when they are found?" asked Mazarin.

"What are we to do?"

"Don't trouble about that. When the time for action arrives you shall learn all that I require of you. Wait till that comes, and find out where your friends are."

Mazarin gave D'Artagnan a bag of money, and the

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introduced are for the most part historical, and they are all drawn with spirit, so that our interest in them never flags. A remarkable point in regard to these historical romances of Dumas is that, in spite of their enormous length, no superfluous dialogue or long descriptions prolong them. Dumas took considerable liberties with the facts of history in several places, as, for instance, in the introduction of D'Artagnan and his friends to Charles I., and in making his trial and execution follow as quickly on his surrender as we are made to believe in "Twenty Years After." The story is further continued in "The Vicomte de Bragelonne."

latter withdrew, to discover in the courtyard that the bag contained silver and not gold.

"Crown pieces only, silver!" exclaimed D'Artagnan; "I guessed as much. Ah, Mazarin, Mazarin, you have no real confidence in me. So much the worse for you!"

But the cardinal was rubbing his hands, and congratulating himself that he had discovered a secret for a tenth of the coin Richelieu would have spent on the matter.

D'Artagnan first sought for Aramis, who was now an abbé, and lived in a convent and wrote sermons. But the heart of Aramis was not in religion, and when D'Artagnan found him, and the two had sat talking for some time, D'Artagnan said, "My friend, it seems to me that when you were a musketeer you were always thinking of the Church, and now that you are an abbé you are always longing to be a musketeer."

"It's true," said Aramis. "Man is a strange bundle of inconsistencies. Since I became an abbé I dream of nothing but battles, and I practise shooting all day long here with an excellent master."

Aramis indeed had both retained his swordsmanship and his interest in public affairs. But when D'Artagnan mentioned Mazarin, and the serious crisis in the state, Aramis declared that Mazarin was an upstart with only the queen on his side; and that the young king, the nobles, and princes, were all against him. Aramis was already on the side of Mazarin's enemies. He could not pledge himself to anyone, and the two separated.

D'Artagnan went on to find Porthos, whose address he had learnt from Aramis. Porthos, who now called himself De Valon after the name of his estate, lived at ease as a country gentleman should; he was a widower and wealthy, but he was mortified because his neighbours were of ancient family and ignored him. He received D'Artagnan with open arms, and when at breakfast he confessed his weariness, D'Artagnan at once invited him

to join him again and promised that he would get a barony for his services.

"Go into harness again!" cried D'Artagnan. "Gird on your sword, and win a coronet. You want a title; I want money; the cardinal wants our help."

"For my part," said the gigantic Porthos, "I certainly want to be made a baron."

They talked of Athos, who lived on his estate at Bragelonne, and was now the Count de la Fère. And Porthos mentioned that Athos had an adopted son.

"If we can get Athos, all will be well," said D'Artagnan. "If we cannot, we must do without him. We two are worth a dozen."

"Yes," said Porthos, smiling at the remembrance of their old exploits; "but we four would be equal to thirty-six."

"I have your word, then?" said D'Artagnan.

"Yes. I will fight heart and soul for the cardinal; but—but he must make me a baron."

"Oh, that's settled already!" said D'Artagnan. "I'll answer for your barony."

With that he had his horse saddled, and rode on to the castle of Bragelonne. Athos was visibly moved at the sight of D'Artagnan, and rushed towards him and clasped him in his arms. D'Artagnan, equally moved, held him closely, while tears stood in his eyes. Athos seemed scarcely aged at all, in spite of his eight-and-forty years; but there was a greater dignity about his face. Formerly, too, he had been a heavy drinker, but now no signs of excess disturbed the calm serenity of his countenance. The presence of his son, whom he called Raoul—a boy of fifteen—seemed to explain to D'Artagnan the regenerated existence of Athos.

Deeply as the heart of Athos was stirred at meeting his old comrade-in-arms, and sincere as his attachment was to D'Artagnan, the Count de la Fère would have nothing to do with any plan for helping Mazarin.

D'Artagnan returned alone to await Porthos in Paris. The same night Athos and his son also left for Paris.

II.—The Four Set Out for England

Queen Henrietta of England, daughter of Henry IV. of France and wife of King Charles I., was lodged in the Louvre, while her husband lost his crown in the civil war. The queen had appealed to Mazarin either to send assistance to Charles I., or to receive him in France, and the cardinal had declined both propositions. Then it was that an Englishman, Lord de Winter, who had come to Paris to get help, appealed to Athos, whom he had known twenty years earlier, to come to England and fight for the king.

Athos and Aramis at once responded, and waited on the queen, who received them in the large empty rooms —left unfurnished by the avarice of the cardinal— allotted to her in the Louvre.

"Gentlemen," said the queen, "a few years ago I had around me knights, treasure, and armies. To-day look around, and know that in order to accomplish a plan which is dearer to me than life I have only Lord de Winter, the friend of twenty years, and you, gentlemen, whom I see for the first time, and whom I know but as my countrymen."

"It is enough," said Athos, bowing low, "if the life of three men can purchase yours, madame."

"I thank you, gentlemen. But hear me. My husband, King of England, is leading so wretched a life that death would be a welcome exchange for him. He has asked for the hospitality of France, and it has been refused him."

"What is to be done?" said Athos. "I have the honour to inquire from your majesty what you desire Monsieur D'Herblay (as Aramis was named) and myself to do in your service. We are ready."

"I, madame," said Aramis, "follow M. de la Fère wherever he leads, even to death, without demanding any reason; but when it concerns your majesty's service, no one precedes me."

"Well, then, gentlemen," said the queen, "since it is thus, and since you are willing to devote yourselves to the service of a poor princess whom everybody has forsaken, this is what must be done for me. The king is alone with a few gentlemen whom he may lose any day, and he is surrounded by the Scotch, whom he distrusts. I ask much, too much, perhaps, for I have no title to ask it. Go to England, join the king, be his friends, his bodyguard; be with him on the field of battle and in his house. Gentlemen, in exchange I can only promise you my love; next to my husband and my children, and before everyone else, you will have my prayers and a sister's love."

"Madame," said Athos, "when must we set out? we are ready!"

The queen, moved to tears, held out her hand, which they kissed, and then, after receiving letters for the king, they withdrew.

"Well," said Aramis, when they were alone, "what do you think of this business, my dear count?"

"Bad!" replied Athos. "Very bad!"

"But you entered on it with enthusiasm."

"As I shall ever do when a great principle is to be defended. Kings are only strong by the aid of the aristocracy; but aristocracy cannot exist without kings. Let us then support monarchy in order to support ourselves.'

"We shall be murdered there," said Aramis. "I hate the English—they are so coarse, like all people who drink beer."

"Would it be better to remain here?" said Athos. "And take a turn in the Bastille, by the cardinal's order? Believe me, Aramis, there is little left to regret. We

avoid imprisonment, and we take the part of heroes—the choice is easy!"

While Athos and Aramis were preparing to go to England on behalf of the king, Mazarin had decided to employ D'Artagnan and Porthos as his envoys to Oliver Cromwell.

"Monsieur D'Artagnan," said the cardinal, "do you wish to become a captain?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Your friend wishes to be made a baron?"

"At this very moment, my lord, he's dreaming that he is one."

"Then," said Mazarin, "take this dispatch, carry it to England, and when you get to London, tear off the outer envelope."

"And on our return, may we, my friend and I, rely on getting our promotion—he his barony, I my captaincy?"

"On the honour of Mazarin, yes."

"I would rather have another sort of oath than that," said D'Artagnan to himself as he went out.

Just as they were leaving Paris, a letter came from Athos, who had already gone.

"Dear D'Artagnan, dear Porthos,—My friends, perhaps this is the last time you will hear from me. I entrust certain papers which are at Bragelonne to your keeping; if in three months you do not hear of me, take possession of them. May God and the remembrance of our friendship support you always.—Your devoted friend, Athos."

III.—In England

Athos and Aramis were with Charles I. at Newcastle. The king had been sold by the Scotch to the English Parliament, and on the approach of Cromwell's army the king's troops refused to fight. Only fifteen men

stood round the king when Cromwell's cavalry came charging down. Lord de Winter was shot dead by his own nephew, who was in Cromwell's army.

"Come, Aramis, now for the honour of France," said Athos, and the two Englishmen who were nearest to them fell mortally wounded.

At the same instant a tremendous shout filled the air, and thirty swords flashed before them. Suddenly a man sprang out of the English ranks, fell upon Athos, wound his muscular arms round him, and tearing his sword from him, said in his ear, "Silence! Yield—you yield to me, don't you?'

A giant from the English ranks at the same moment seized Aramis by the wrists, who struggled in vain to get free.

"I yield myself prisoner," said Aramis, giving up his sword to Porthos.

"D'Art——" exclaimed Athos; but the musketeer covered his mouth with his hand.

The ranks opened. D'Artagnan held the bridle of Athos' horse, and Porthos that of Aramis, and they led their prisoners off the field.

"We are all four lost if you give the least sign you know us," said D'Artagnan.

"The king—where is the king?" Athos exclaimed anxiously.

"Ah! We have got him!"

"Yes," said Aramis; "through a base act of treachery!"

Porthos pressed his friend's hand, and answered, "Yes; all is fair in war—stratagem as well as force. Look yonder!"

The squadron, which ought to have protected the king, was advancing to meet the English regiments.

The king, who was entirely surrounded, walked alone on foot. He caught sight of Athos and Aramis, and greeted them.

"Farewell, messieurs. The day has been unfortunate, but it is not your fault, thank God! But where is my old friend Winter?"

"Look for him with Strafford," said a voice.

Charles shuddered. He saw a corpse at his feet. It was Winter's.

That hour messengers were sent off in every direction over England and Europe to announce that Charles Stuart was now the prisoner of Oliver Cromwell. D'Artagnan not only accomplished the release of the prisoners, he also joined with his friends in a bold attempt to rescue Charles from his captors.

D'Artagnan at first naturally assumed they would all four return to France as quickly as possible; but Athos declared that he could not abandon the king, and still meant to save him if it were possible.

"But what can you do in a foreign land; in an enemy's country?" said D'Artagnan. "Did you promise the queen to storm the Tower of London? Come, Porthos, what do you think of this business?"

"Nothing good," said Porthos.

"Friend," said Athos, "our minds are made up! Ah, if we had you with us! With you, D'Artagnan, and you, Porthos—all four, and reunited for the first time for twenty years—we would dare, not only England but the three kingdoms together!"

"Very well," cried D'Artagnan furiously, "very well, since you wish it, let us leave our bones in this horrible land, where it is always cold, where the fine weather comes after a fog, and the fog after rain; in truth, whether we die here or elsewhere matters little, since we must die sooner or later."

"But your future career, D'Artagnan? Your ambition, Porthos?" said Athos.

"Our future, our ambition!" replied D'Artagnan bitterly. "What do we need to think of that for, if we are to save the king? The king saved, we shall

assemble our friends together, reconquer England, and place him securely on the throne."

"And he shall make us dukes and peers," said Porthos joyfully at this cheerful prospect.

"Or he will forget us," added D'Artagnan.

"Then," said Athos, offering his hand to D'Artagnan, "I swear to you, my friend, by the God who hears us, I believe there is a power watching over us, and I look forward to our all meeting in France again."

"So be it!" said D'Artagnan; "but I confess I have quite a contrary conviction. However, 'tis settled; but I stay in England only on one condition, that I don't have to learn the language."

The attempt to rescue Charles from his guards on the way to London was only frustrated by the sudden arrival of General Harrison, with a large body of soldiers, and D'Artagnan and his friends made their escape by a hasty flight, and followed to London.

"We must see this tragedy played out to the end," said Athos. "Do not let us leave England while any hope remains."

And the others agreed.

IV.—At Whitehall

The intrepid four were present at the trial of Charles I., and it was the voice of Athos that called out, "You lie!" when the prosecutor declared that the accusation against the king was put forward by the English people.

Fortunately, D'Artagnan managed to get Athos out of the court quickly, and then, followed by Porthos and Aramis, they mingled in the crowd outside undetected.

Sentence having been pronounced against the king, the only thing to be done by the four was to get rid of

the London executioner; this meant at least a few days delay while another executioner was being procured. D'Artagnan undertook this difficult task, while Aramis was to personate Bishop Juxon, the royal chaplain, and explain to Charles the attempt being made to save him. Athos engaged to get everything ready for leaving England.

On the very night before the execution Aramis brought the king a message from D'Artagnan, "Tell the king that to-morrow, at ten o'clock at night, we shall carry him off." Aramis added, "He has said it, and he will do it."

The scaffold was already being constructed in Whitehall as he spoke, but D'Artagnan had the London executioner fast bound under lock and key in a cellar, and Athos had a light skiff waiting at Greenwich. Not only this, but at midnight these four wonderful men, thanks to Athos, who spoke excellent English, were also at work at the scaffold—having bribed the carpenter in charge to let them assist—and at the same time boring a hole in the wall. The scaffold, which had two lower stories, and was covered with black serge, was at the height of twenty feet, on a level with the window in the king's room; and the hole communicated with a narrow loft, between the floor of the king's room, and the ceiling of the one below it.

The plan was to pass through the hole into the loft, and cut out from below a piece of the flooring of the king's room, so as to form a kind of trap-door. The king was to escape through this on the following night, and, hidden by the black covering of the scaffold, was then to change his dress for that of a workman, and so pass the sentinels on duty, and reach the skiff that was waiting for him at Greenwich.

At nine o'clock in the morning Aramis, this time in attendance on Bishop Juxon, was once more in the king's room.

"Sire," he said, "you are saved! The London executioner has vanished, and there is no executioner nearer at hand than Bristol. The Count de la Fère is two feet below you; take the poker from the fireplace, and strike three times on the floor. He will answer you. He has the path ready for your majesty to escape by."

The king did as Aramis suggested, and in reply came three dull knocks from below.

"The Count de la Fère," said Aramis.

All was ready; nothing as far as D'Artagnan and Athos could see, had been overlooked; twenty-four hours hence would see the king beyond the reach of his adversaries.

And then just as Charles had satisfied himself that his life was saved, a Parliamentary officer and a file of soldiers entered the king's room to announce his immediate execution.

"Then it is for to-day?" asked the king.

"Were not you warned that it was to take place this morning?"

"Then I must die like a common criminal by the hand of the London executioner?"

"The London executioner has disappeared, but a man has offered his services instead. The execution will, therefore, take place at the appointed hour."

A fanatical Puritan, nephew of Lord de Winter—whom he slew at Newcastle—and a trusted lieutenant of Cromwell's did the work of the headsman, and upon Athos, waiting in concealment beneath the scaffold, fell drops of the king's blood.

When all was over the four hastened away in deep dejection to the skiff at Greenwich, and so to France. But when they had landed at Dunkirk it was plain to D'Artagnan that their troubles were not yet at an end.

"Porthos and I were sent by Cardinal Mazarin to fight for Cromwell; instead of fighting for Cromwell,

we have served Charles I.; that's not the same thing at all."

However, D'Artagnan and Porthos, on their return to Paris, rendered such signal service to Mazarin and to the queen, by guarding them from the violence of the mob, and by quelling a riot, that D'Artagnan received his commission as captain of musketeers, and Porthos his barony.

The four old friends met once more in Paris before they separated. Aramis was returning to his convent, Athos and Porthos to their estates. As war had just broken out in Flanders, D'Artagnan made ready to go thither.

Then all four embraced, with tears in their eyes. And after that they departed on their various ways, not knowing whether they were ever to see each other again.

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